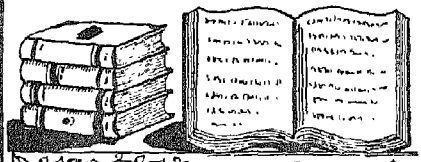

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II

THE STORY OF A SOLDIER'S LIFE

BY

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY

O.M., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT AND PLANS

SECOND IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

In the following pages I have tried to record the noble actions I have witnessed, and to describe the men I have been associated with. I have set down nought in malice, and therefore beg my readers to forgive what may be my prejudices.

WOLSELEY, F.M.

Farm House
Glynde
September 14, 1903

TO

THE RT. HONOURABLE

LORD MOUNT-STEPHEN.

I DEDICATE THESE VOLUMES OF VARIED EXPERIENCES

TO YOU WHO FOR FORTY YEARS HAVE

GIVEN ME YOUR UNVARYING

FRIENDSHIP.

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CHAPTER XXVII

China War of 1860

IN my narrative of the events of 1857 I mentioned that we had despatched troops to China early in that year for the purpose of enforcing our claims against its Government. When the Bengal Mutiny broke out, however, those regiments were diverted from the Canton River to the Hooghly, my battalion being one of them.

Our relations with the Pekin Government had not improved during the years 1857, 1858 and 1859. Being then seriously engaged in India, we were compelled to play a "waiting game" in China, and to content ourselves with some insignificant military operations in the neighbourhood of Canton, of which city we took possession. By the end of 1859 we had put down the Bengal Mutiny. We had re-established our supremacy from the Himalayas to the Carnatic, and could at last spare sufficient troops to bring his Tartar Majesty of Pekin to reason.

Sir Hope Grant's staff were naturally anxious he should be selected to command in the coming war, for we hoped and expected he would take us with him to Pekin. The only other man we could think of as being a serious competitor was Sir William Mansfield, whom the Army disliked extremely. His natural ability was undoubted, but it was not of the character that suffices to make a great military

leader, and he was known to be too short-sighted for practical work in the field. We assumed he would make every effort to obtain the chief command in this coming war, and that Lord Clyde would feel bound to support him in doing so. As we afterwards ascertained, both Lord Clyde and Lord Canning supported his candidature, but His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, then the Commander-in-Chief, very wisely, I think, preferred Sir Hope Grant.

About Christmas, 1859, news reached Lucknow that the Home Government had at last decided upon sending an expeditionary force of some 10,000 men to China with that object in view. The Emperor Napoleon III, being anxious to co-operate, it was arranged that he should send a French contingent of 7,000 men under General Montauban, who was then highly thought of in France.[1]

There is no nation, numerically as great as China, whose customs and modes of life are so generally common to all parts of their vast empire. To me they are the most remarkable race on earth, and I have always thought and still believe them to be the great coming rulers of the world. They only want a Chinese Peter the Great or Napoleon to make them so. They have every quality required for the good soldier and the good sailor, and in my idle speculation upon this world's future I have long selected them as the combatants on one side at the great Battle of Armageddon, the people of the United States of America being their opponents. The latter nation is fast becoming the greatest power of the

[1] Our quota was afterwards increased to 13,000. But the force eventually landed at Pehtang the beginning of August, 1860, consisted of 11,000 British and 6,500 French troops.

world. Thank Heaven, they speak English, are governed by an English system of laws, and profess the same regard that we have for what both understand by fair play in all national as well as in all private business.

The origin of the China War can be stated in a few sentences. Lord Elgin had patched up a treaty of peace with the Celestial Empire in 1858, and in accordance with its provisions we were entitled to have a resident Minister in Pekin. This was generally thought to be the most important of the concessions we had obtained, and we were consequently anxious to take advantage of it. But to the Chinese rulers it was the most objectionable clause in that treaty. They had agreed to it on paper, but it was evident from the first that they never meant to allow us to take advantage of it. Had any worldly wisdom directed Pekin diplomacy at this epoch, instead of flouting us, the emperor would have grappled us to him with "hooks of steel" by conceding all the just demands we had made upon him and his people. They would have tried to make friends of us in order to induce us to help them against the Tai-ping rebels, with whom they were themselves unable to cope. In May and June the aspect of affairs at Canton had already become serious for the Pekin Government owing to this rebel movement. The most stupid amongst them should have realized that any attack made by us in the north of China would necessarily be of great help to the rebel cause in every province. The emperor was unable even to drive from the Yang-tse-Kiang Valley the Canton cooly who had set himself up at Nankin under the assumed title of "Tien wan," or "The Heavenly King"; and yet his Ministers deliberately acted in a manner that left us no alternative except a declaration

of war! The Government of Pekin, ever since we have had any dealings with it down to the present day, has always displayed a clever cunning in small matters of professional diplomacy. But as regards the treatment of all affairs of great international importance to them and to us, they have invariably acted as if they were idiots. Their rule is only to concede when concession has become unavoidable, and they are often unwise enough to refuse demands which common international custom recognizes as a matter of course. It was conduct of this nature that drove us, much against our wish, into this war. In fact, they brought upon themselves our occupation of Pekin and the destruction of the Summer Palace. They are an inconsequent people, and it would seem as if their rulers never can learn wisdom from experience. If in the future they ever do so learn wisdom, they ought to become the most powerful nation upon earth.

Sir Frederick Bruce, then our Minister in China, announced to the Imperial authorities that he meant to proceed, viâ the Taku forts, to Pekin, for the purpose of taking up his official residence there, in accordance with the provisions of our recent treaty. Shortly after this announcement he proceeded to the Gulf of Pecheli with a fleet under the command of Admiral Sir James Hope, a first-rate officer and the bravest of brave sailors. When, with several gunboats, he attempted to enter the Pei-Ho, the Chinese opened a heavy artillery fire upon him from the Taku Forts at the mouth of that river.

With more hardihood than wisdom our admiral, not content with returning this fire, landed a considerable body of marines and bluejackets on the deep mud which lay between the river and the most important of the forts

on its right or southern bank. The attempt ended in disaster, and the landing party had to return to their ships, having suffered heavily, Sir James Hope being himself amongst the wounded. I have been told by men who were there that his cool courage was remarkable even amongst the brave men around him. When one gunboat was sunk under him, he went on board another and hoisted his flag there. I believe he was obliged to do this twice, two gunboats bearing his flag having been sunk one after the other. In this unfortunate affair four of our gunboats and one gun vessel were sunk, and our total loss in killed and wounded throughout the day was about 500 of all ranks. This very serious repulse made war inevitable, and we entered upon it with the least possible delay.

In accordance with orders from home, Lord Clyde had been told to select the general to command in the coming campaign, and also the officers required for the staff work in connexion with it. He wisely made choice of General Sir Hope Grant, who had distinguished himself upon all occasions when engaged during the great Indian Mutiny.

Sir Hope Grant's military instinct, mellowed by war's experience, invariably prompted him correctly. A soldier and a daring leader of men, he possessed keen, bright views upon war in all its many phases. He was a man of strong opinions and with plenty of ideas—and good ones too—but either from faults of education or want of practice in putting his views into words, he could not always clearly describe to others what it was he wanted done. There were men who, jealous of his invariable success and of his great popularity in the army, heartily disliked him, and consequently took a pleasure in belittling his capacity and in describing him as "puzzle-headed."

But they were by no means the best officers, nor were they ever likely themselves to be leaders of armies. Honourable dealing between man and man was in him intuitive. His faith in an all-seeing God, who watched over soldiers, was as the very life within him. His religion was of the simplest nature, though it was an all-powerful force that influenced all he did and all he said. He tried to serve God with all his might, but detested priestly dogmas and the sophisms of theology. Death had no horror for him: it would only come at the time God had appointed for it. A young aide-de-camp, to whom he was much attached, went to see him shortly before his death, and breaking down upon seeing the already pallid face of the general he loved, he burst into tears. Sir Hope said to him in his usual cheery way: "Oh, my dear boy, to die is nothing; it is only going from one room into another." So it was to him then, and had always been in action, where no thought of personal danger ever seemed to occur to him. Upon many an occasion (when in action) those about him remonstrated with him upon his recklessness, he would laughingly concede the point and admit he was wrong, but within a few minutes afterwards he was again in quite as exposed a position.

When Sir Hope Grant was informed he had been selected to command in the war we were about to enter upon in China, I was Quarter-Master-General of the Oudh Division which he then commanded. I was a brevet lieutenant-colonel, and had already seen much active service. Sir Hope wished to take me with him to China as his Quarter-Master-General, but Lord Clyde did not approve, and I think he was right, for I had not had the experience required for such a position. He selected a much better

man in every way for it—Colonel "Jock" Mackenzie, of the Gordon Highlanders. No man knew the army more thoroughly, and no one in it was more conversant with the duties of the office he was selected for, especially in connexion with the embarkation of troops, in dealing with the navy, and in the feeding and housing of an army. He was also in every sense a thorough soldier, and the dearest and best of friends. His assistant was to be Colonel Robert Ross, of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, who had served under him at Balaclava in that same position, and I was to be the third man of the department. I had much to learn, and it was consequently of great advantage to me that I was to serve under two such able and experienced staff officers, by whom I was sure to be well taught. They were both old Crimean comrades of mine, who I knew thought well of me, and both were far older and had much greater army experience than I had.

Sir Hope Grant selected Lieutenant, now General, Sir Robert Biddulph, to be his military secretary. He had been for some time on his staff as adjutant-general of the Oudh Division. If I may presume to say so of an old comrade who is still alive, he was a first-rate man all round for that difficult and delicate position. No man could have filled it better.

We all embarked in the steamer *Fiery Cross* at Calcutta, and landed at Hong Kong March 13, 1860. During the voyage all of us read every available book upon China; I also played a good deal of chess with Augustus Anson, my old tent companion during our campaigns in Oudh. I had been a chess player ever since I was a small boy, and played fairly well. Sir Hope Grant, though a man of fifty-two years of age, entered into all our boyish amuse-

ments. He was a first-rate "cock-fighter," and beat us all at that game, and no one enjoyed the rough play of "High Cock-a-Lorum" more than he did. We were all very fond of him, and those who, like myself, knew him well, had a real affection for him. We took a delight in his daring courage, his indifference to self, and were proud to have him as our leader in the war we were about to undertake.

What a busy place Hong Kong then was. Its fine roadstead became day by day more crowded with transports, and its streets swarmed with all sorts and conditions of officers ashore for the day to see what John Chinaman had for sale. Every one in the Quarter-Master-General's department was busy from early morning to hot, dry eve. We had just negotiated for the purchase of some land on the mainland, a promontory called Kowloon, suited for camping purposes. There was no land on the island of Hong-Kong itself where troops could be put under canvas, and very little good drinking water was to be found upon its granite and freestone hills.

Captain, now Sir Peter Lumsden, one of our ablest Indian staff officers and I, were ordered to sketch the ground at Kowloon that was required for camping purposes. It is now part of our Hong Kong territory. There, all of us who had come from India, saw for the first time some practice with our new Armstrong breechloading guns. Their range and accuracy delighted us, and all regretted we had not possessed them during the Mutiny. We laughed as we thought how they would tickle-up poor John Chinaman in the neighbourhood of Pekin.

It had already begun to be warm in Calcutta when we embarked there, and we were consequently inclined all

the more to enjoy the refreshing breeze of the north-east monsoon during our stay at Hong Kong.

Canton was then in our military occupation, and I thoroughly enjoyed the trip I made to see it. When we took possession of it, we captured the Chinese mandarin who governed it and the surrounding province. He was a cruel brute, without any regard for human life, and ruled by fear. Asked by an English officer if it were true that he had that year executed 60,000 men, he thought for a moment, and then said: "Oh! I beheaded far more than that." We found in the city many walled-in yards filled with the skulls of those he had beheaded.

Practically we knew little and could not find out much about the north of China. Hitherto all the warlike operations we had ever carried on in the country were confined to the neighbourhood of Canton, Shanghai and the Chussan group of islands. As usual, our most difficult problem was the provision of enough suitable land transport. We raised an excellent Cooly Corps, which did us first-rate service throughout the ensuing campaign. Plucky, cheery and very strong carriers they were, easily fed and easily commanded. We obtained good muleteers from Manilla and bullock drivers from Madras and Bombay. All our Eastern possessions were in fact laid under contribution for camp followers of various sorts.

Our military force available for operations in the north embraced some regiments of Bengal Pandies and of Madras and Bombay Sepoys. What poor creatures they looked when seen side by side with the men of our other native regiments drawn from the fighting tribes of Northern India, the wild Pathans, the tall stubborn Sikhs, and the proud Punjaubee Mussulmans. The embarkation and the

provisioning of these various creeds for the voyage to the Gulf of Pechelee was no easy task, and gave full occupation to all the officers of the Quarter-Master-General's department.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Chusan and Pootoo—Talienwan Bay, 1860

ON March 8, 1860, our Minister at Shanghai had sent an ultimatum to the Pekin Government, in which he detailed what had taken place when he had last endeavoured, in accordance with the terms of our treaty, to land at the mouth of the Pei-Ho River for the purpose of proceeding to Pekin. Having described those events, he went on to say that Her Britannic Majesty's Government required the absolute and unconditional acceptance of the following terms: An ample and satisfactory apology for having fired upon our ships from the Taku forts, and the return of all the guns and ships we had abandoned upon that occasion; the ratification of our Treaty of Tien-tsin to be exchanged without delay at Pekin, to which city our Minister would proceed, going up the Pei-Ho River in a British vessel, etc., etc.; the payment of an indemnity for the injury we had received when our gunboats attempted to enter the Pei-Ho River, etc., etc.; the last and most important clause was that unless we received within thirty days of the date of our letter an unqualified acceptance of those terms, we should compel the emperor to observe the engagements he had entered into at Tien-tsin, and which he had approved by his edict of July, 1858.

The reply arrived a couple of days before the time we had fixed as the limit within which it was to reach us. It came from the Chinese Commissioners at Shanghai, and not from the Great Council at Pekin, as it should have done had the Imperial Court conceded to us the right we claimed of being treated by them as equals. On all other points also their answer to our demands was so unsatisfactory that Sir Hope Grant and General Montauban determined to begin operations at once by landing troops upon the Island of Chusan. This was a movement that had been directed from home, and a very stupid and useless one it was, for the Chinese Government attached little importance to it. The French and English fleets proceeded there forthwith, carrying a British infantry brigade, some artillery and engineers, etc., etc. The French sent a couple of hundred marines to represent their army upon this expedition. Sir Hope Grant was to command, General Montauban remaining at Shanghai. I accompanied Sir Hope in the *Grenada*, the ship we had hired from the P. & O. Company to be Army Headquarters whilst the war lasted.

In our previous war of 1848–9 with China we had occupied Tinghai, the capital town of Chusan, and had retained possession of it for a couple of years. We now anchored off that city and sent a flag of truce ashore to demand its surrender. This was at once conceded.

Mr., afterwards Sir Harry Parkes, an able, daring and very remarkable man, who spoke Chinese fluently, had drafted a proclamation to be posted up in Tinghai and in all the neighbouring towns, announcing our intended occupation of the islands, etc., etc. In it he had referred to the previous "British Occupation." Our sensitive allies asked us to change the expression to "European

Occupation," which was done as a matter of course to please them. They did not wish it to be officially remembered that we had ever made war in the Flowery Land without their assistance. How unlike us rude Britishers they are in all such matters!

A guard of fifty English soldiers and a like number of French marines landed and took possession of the city, our detachment being quartered in an old stone building we had erected as a hospital during our former occupation of the island.

The Union Jack and the French tricolour were hoisted side by side. Unfortunately the spar from which our flag flew was a few feet higher than the old Joss pole upon which that of France appeared. This could not be allowed, so a party of sailors from a French man-of-war soon appeared with a spar still higher than ours. Had we been nationally sensitive upon such a point we might have "gone one better," until the Tower of Babel would have been but a tiny erection in comparison with the height of those competing flag-staffs.

Here in Chusan, as is generally to be found throughout the length and breadth of China, literally every perch of land was cultivated and grew something that meant, in one shape or other, food for man. With this object in view, all classes are very careful in the collection of every species of manure that could fertilize their land. Even the narrow ridges which bound the canals were planted with beans and other vegetables. Clover and barley covered every suitable slope, whilst the ground that could be irrigated was rich with waving barley and brightly green with young rice. The steep and rugged hills were terraced everywhere to admit of cultivation, and the spots

whose apparent sterility or very steep declivities forbid all hope of crops were used as cemeteries. I must not call them places of burial, for except in the rich families, John Chinaman does not usually either burn or bury his dead friends or parents. His custom is to place them in strong substantial coffins, rectangular in shape, upon spots outside of cities, spots usually selected because of their otherwise valueless nature.

Tinghai, like most cities in China, was walled round, and was said to have 30,000 inhabitants. It contained the usual temples, rich, inside especially, with bright colours and good wood carving. Having been lately accustomed to the flat, ugly banks of the Woosung and Yang-tse-Kiang rivers, the scenery around the city gratified and soothed us with its varied shapes and colours. I carried away a pleasing remembrance of the place where Sir Colin Campbell, with his battalion, had so long been quartered during our first China war.

From Chusan we steamed to the sacred island of Poo-too, which lies eastward of and close to the Chusan group. It is regarded by all Buddhists as a very sacred place, and like the promontory of Mount Athos, no women are allowed to land upon it. Thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the empire flock there annually in the early spring, and again at the end of summer.

We were kindly received by the chief priest or abbot of the place, and were shown over all its temples and buildings. The wood-carving everywhere, though grotesque, was artistic and very good, but the roofs of several temples were sadly in want of repair. There were some finely ornamented bronze bells and gongs and immense urns, and also some parchment-covered drums scattered about

the open courtyards. Everywhere the eye fell upon moral precepts painted on prominent rocks or richly carved on screens of hard wood, and everything was decorated with representations of the "Imperial Dragon." The two written characters most common in all the buildings were those which represent "happiness" and "longevity." In every temple was a statue of the Goddess of Mercy, who is, as it were, the patron saint of the place. The smell of burnt joss-stick pervaded every building, and in each was a notice forbidding the faithful to smoke within those sacred precincts. I there saw for the only time in my life a Buddhist priest in that condition of spiritual abstraction which lengthened contemplation of holy subjects and deep meditations upon the Supreme Deity is said to induce. The man whilst in that condition is supposed to have lost his human identity, and to have become for the time being an integral portion of the Supreme God Himself. The priest whom I saw in this state sat in a raised niche of the great gate into the principal building. I watched him in silence and somewhat in awe for certainly over five minutes, during which time he never moved or winked his eyelids, whilst his eyeballs, glazed over as it were with a film, looked hard and metallic, and seemed to be absolutely sightless. He never moved a muscle of his face or body as I watched him, and if he were not in an actual trance, he certainly was an accomplished actor.

There was at places a profusion of azaleas, peonies and other flowering shrubs. One of the three great temples of the island stood in a splendid grove of white camellia trees of from twenty to thirty feet in height. All were covered with blossoms, the fallen petals of which strewed

the ground beneath. It was a lovely spot, and 500 men might have encamped beneath those tall, stately trees. On the whole, had it been desirable to have formed a sanatorium anywhere during the war, Sir Hope Grant would have done so upon this island of Poo-too, whose buildings of all sorts would have provided accommodation for about 2,000 men. Had this been done, he would have transferred to the mainland the few old priests who were the only permanent residents on the island. Having spent this one day, April 24, 1860, at Poo-too, we steamed away south for Hong Kong.

About the middle of May, 1860, our little army began to embark at Hong Kong for the Gulf of Pecheli. It consisted of two infantry divisions and of one cavalry brigade, with four batteries of field, one of horse artillery, and one of mountain guns, besides a small siege train of heavy artillery, the total strength of all ranks being 14,000. It was carried in 120 hired transports, and was accompanied by a fleet of seventy pennants, gunboats included. I do not think that England had ever before begun a war with so well organized an army. It was small, but nothing that could add to the health and comfort of our troops, or to their efficiency as a fighting body, had been neglected.

On our way north Sir Hope Grant called in at Shanghai, where we found every one in a state of panic. The rebels had lately captured the rich city of Soochow, and were then moving steadily towards Shanghai, which they announced their intention to take at all hazards. The Chinese merchants were already flying from the place with their goods and families. Most of the shops in the native city were closed, and where it was usual to find a large fleet of trading junks, scarcely one of any size remained.

All trade had ceased, and alarm prevailed in all the country round. The European merchants realized the danger of the position, and at their request a battalion of marines was landed for the protection of life and property, to which a regiment of Sikhs and another of Punjaubees were subsequently added.

The governor-general of the province, a gentleman named Ho, now made to us the oddest request which the ruler of an invaded territory had, I presume, ever addressed to his enemy. He begged us to land and march upon Soochow and retake it for the emperor. He was kind enough to add that if we did this, he would inform his celestial master of the valuable services we had rendered, and he had no doubt that, as a reward for those services, we should be granted all we asked!

Three days' steaming took us from Shanghai to the Gulf of Pecheli, where we at once proceeded to examine the localities selected as the respective rendezvous of the two allied forces. That selected by the French was Che-foo, a small walled city about a quarter of a mile from the sea, and on the western shore of the gulf. The bay upon which it stood was small, but large enough for our ally's small force. There was not an over abundant supply of fresh water, but it was sufficient for all the French requirements. The land around, as usual in all parts of China, was well cultivated. The inhabitants were then busy gathering in the harvest, and preparing the land for other crops. No rice is grown so far north. At one place I saw two donkeys with a bullock between them yoked to a plough! The French purchased there a number of good mules, of which many were to be found in the neighbourhood. Our allies were busy in putting together their tiny little iron gunboats which

had come from France as freight, each in fifteen pieces. When screwed together each boat, consisting of three water-tight compartments, carried a small rifled gun, but they were, I think, more ingenious in design than practically useful.

According to arrangements between the allied commanders, their forces were to be ready by July 1 to sail from their respective rendezvous in the Gulf of Pecheli.

We had landed our troops in Talienwan Bay, on the eastern coast of the gulf. Good fresh water was nowhere plentiful, and as we had a brigade of cavalry, and all our batteries had brought their horses with them, we required a great deal of it. We therefore distributed our brigades at several points. The country was wild and hilly, no trees anywhere. Well-flavoured oysters abounded along the rocky seashore, and were for a few days a great treat to all ranks. But they produced such serious stomach aches and bowel complaints, that their use had to be discontinued.

By printed proclamations distributed broadcast amongst the villages, we assured the inhabitants of good treatment, and gave information to those who felt they were ill-treated how they should act in order to obtain redress. When our huge fleet first arrived, the inhabitants fled inland, but—the women excepted—all returned in a few days. We bought their eggs, vegetables, etc., etc., and soon restored confidence. Our only difficulty was with our Chinese coolies, who were incorrigible plunderers. We flogged all we caught thieving, but it was impossible to keep them in order.

It took the French some time to obtain the mules they required even for the few small field guns they had with

them. Meanwhile we amused ourselves and our men at Talienwan Bay as best we could. Numerous excursions were made inland, and the people soon became accustomed to see us amongst them. There was, however, always an apparent dread lest we should at any moment suddenly develop into the "foreign devils" they even still in their hearts believed us to be. Every village had its watchman perched upon some point of vantage where he could see all approaching strangers from afar, and thus give warning to the community at large.

During our long wait for the French in Talienwan Bay, we received the news of the celebrated fight between Heenan and Sayers. It had been the one common topic of conversation amongst all ranks in our army for the whole previous month. The charming French officer who was attached to our headquarter staff as the daily means of communication between the two allied armies said he thought we had all run mad. That any civilized modern army, about to enter upon a serious war in an unknown country against an army of unknown numbers, should at such a solemn and important moment take an all-absorbing interest in the result of a vulgar prize-fight was, he said, beyond any foreigner's philosophy. I remember a leading article—I think it was in the *Saturday Review*—in which the writer, in describing the intense interest taken at home in this fight, said that if upon the morning after it the Archbishop of Canterbury had met the Lord Chancellor, the first question of that holy man would have been, "What do you think of the fight?"

We had from the first selected Pehtang, about eight miles due north of the Pei-Ho, as our landing place, and the French general commanding had fixed upon Chi-Kiang-ho

as the place of disembarkation for his army.[1] But General Montauban now asserted it would not suit owing to the shallowness of its waters. We suspicious Britishers imagined they had begun to think that their army was too small to operate far away from us. Be this as it may, after several conferences between the two generals respectively in command of the "Allied Armies," it was decided, to the regret of every Englishman present, that the two forces should land together at Pehtang. We established a reserve of stores at the camp we had just quitted in Talienwan Bay, leaving a strong detachment with it as a guard.

On July 20, 1860, the army having re-embarked, our great crowd of transports started under the protection of Admiral Sir James Hope's fleet of war ships. All were under sail in two lines, each line being led by a frigate. All told, it was a fleet of one hundred and seventy-three British ships. The French fleet, in all, thirty-three vessels, men-of-war and hired transports, joined us at sea, and formed a third line. It was the greatest number of ships I ever saw under sail together as one fleet, and was a magnificent spectacle, never to be forgotten. It was no mere naval review intended to amuse Cowes yachtsmen; it was an actual fighting reality; a man-of-war fleet convoying a huge collection of transports that carried an army of about 20,000 soldiers, with all their horses, guns, fighting material and food, for the invasion of a great and ancient, though little understood, empire. The distant Chinese capital, the far-famed Pekin, the city of mystery

[1] The distance by road between Pehtang and Pei-Ho was twelve miles.

and of fable to all the yellow race, was our hoped-for destination.

We had a light fair wind, which sent us along about five knots an hour over a calm sea. The sun shone brightly upon our sails, and was just hot enough to make the shade enjoyable, the sky was clear and blue. Altogether, the colour and form, the light and shadow, and the sunlight on a sea crowded with sail-covered ships, made up a beautiful scene, a picture it is indeed a pleasure to recall. Who present could wish to be elsewhere ?

We anchored the day following at the appointed rendezvous, and on July 30 moved in nearer the low-lying coast-line. On the 31st it blew hard, and the sea was so rough that we did not land until August 1.

Before I proceed to describe our campaign in Northern China, I must refer to the fact, well known at the time on the spot, that our army was hampered throughout its course by the French contingent we had to act with. Experience has taught me how gallant and daring in action is the French soldier of every rank. Our military history abounds with the stories of battles where we learnt to respect him as an enemy, and to admire his pluck and his heroic endurance. My own generation stood beside him in the Crimea, and we saw him succeed there whilst we failed. I do not dwell upon the causes that led to our failure, but the fact remains that whilst we did fail there, the military ability and military aptitude and the superior strength of their army in the field, enabled the French to win all along the line. In China, however, we had a larger army than the French ; indeed, we had to leave some of it behind to satisfy their susceptibilities by keeping strictly within the numbers we had agreed to place in the field. We

also possessed the great advantage of having at Hong Kong a good military and naval station well supplied with reserves of warlike stores to draw upon. The French had none of these local advantages, and their army had left France by no means well-eqiupped for war in a far-off Eastern country. We had long experience in such wars. They had none. Our alliance with France for this campaign in China may have suited our foreign policy for the time being, but the presence of this little French contingent with us in the field was a serious hindrance to our military operations throughout this campaign. In one of Sir Harry Parkes' published letters he wrote as follows on July 25, 1860: "This dreadful alliance is a very, very great reason for our devoutly desiring a speedy settlement of the question. They do us no good, and act, in fact, in every respect just like a drag upon our coach. *They use our stores, get in our way at all points, and retard all our movements.*" [1]

[1] Page 346, vol. i. of *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, by Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole.

CHAPTER XXIX

Army Lands at Peh-Tang, August 1, 1860

THE landing party consisted of General Sutton's brigade of foot, with a nine-pounder and a rocket battery, conveyed in large troop boats, each of which held fifty soldiers. All were towed ashore by two small gun-vessels. We soon came in sight of the high cavaliers in the shore forts, which at that epoch were always striking features in Chinese sea coast defences. Pushing on, the boats anchored under the mud bank of the southern side of the river about a mile below the forts. No enemy showed himself beyond what we should have called a couple of squadrons of mounted Tartars who kept near the gate through which leads the road to Sinho and the Taku Forts. There was about a mile of a deep muddy flat to be waded through immediately upon landing, so there was little of the pomp and circumstance of war about that operation. The first man to jump ashore and lead up the mud bank was the brigadier. He was an old campaigner well known for his swearing propensities, and famous as a great game shot in South Africa. I shall never forget his appearance as he struggled through that mud, knee deep in many places. He had taken off trousers, boots and socks, and slung them over his brass scabbarded sword which he carried over one shoulder. Picture a somewhat fierce and ugly bandy-legged little

man thus accoutred in a big white helmet, clothed in a dirty jacket of red serge, below which a very short slate-coloured flannel shirt extended a few inches, cursing and swearing loudly " all round " at everybody and everything as he led his brigade through that hateful mire. I remember many funny scenes in my soldiering days, but I never laughed more than I did at this amusing " disembarkation " of the first brigade that landed in northern China.

We had a cold, bad and wet bivouac that night. Neither tree nor bush to burn, and no fresh water to drink, for every calabash had been soon emptied in the exertion of struggling through the mud. Around us many marshy spots of dirty salt water, but not a drop to drink. In the middle of the night Major—afterwards Sir Henry—Wilmot and I started back on the mud in search of the Quarter-Master-General's boat, in which I knew there was a small keg of drinking water. After a long dreary and fatiguing march to and fro, we reached the bivouac, carrying the water keg slung on an oar between us. We met with a warm reception. During the night, Mr.—afterwards Sir Harry—Parkes the most indefatigable and most daring of men, together with an officer of the Quarter-Master-General's department, made his way unopposed into the town of Peh-Tang. The inhabitants said there were no soldiers there, so those two gentlemen broke open the fort gate, and soon returned to our general with the news. The people told them they suffered much from the Tartar patrols that frequently visited them. They hated these Tartars, to whom they referred in an " aside "—not intended to be overheard by Mr. Parkes—as " stinking more than you English do." We think ourselves a cleanly race, but we must evidently have to Chinese noses a strong " national smell " we wot not of ourselves.

The next day and thenceforward until we finally left the place for the Pei-Ho River, our men were horribly crowded in Peh-Tang, having to share its limited accommodation with the French. Our Chinese Cooly Corps, some 2,500 strong, under Major Temple, did us most excellent service in landing our stores, etc., at Peh-Tang; but they were great rascals and difficult to keep in any order in a Chinese town like Peh-Tang.

On August 9 I was sent with 200 cavalry and 100 foot to reconnoitre the enemy's position in the direction of Sinho, a large village about six miles south-west of Peh-Tang. I made a wide detour with the cavalry, pushing on within a mile of the enemy's left flank at that place. I returned without firing a shot with the glad tidings that the line I had taken led over firm ground suitable for all arms, intersected with many pools of good fresh water.

We had some heavy rain during our hateful halt at Peh-Tang, a stay much prolonged by the French, who were slow in their disembarkation of both men and stores, through want of the necessary appliances. We all longed to get away from that town's muddy, filthy streets and stinking houses, so when it became known in the evening of August 11 that we were to celebrate our grouse-shooting festival of the morrow by an advance on Sin-Ho, every heart rejoiced. It is only through experience of the sensation that we learn how intense, even in anticipation, is the rapture-giving delight which the attack upon an enemy affords. I cannot analyze nor weigh, nor can I justify the feeling. But once really experienced, all other subsequent sensations are but as the tinkling of a doorbell in comparison with the throbbing toll of Big Ben.

The 11th August was a wet day, and the weather did

not look very promising at daybreak the following morning, but no rain fell. The plan of operations was simple. The second Division under Sir Robert, afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala, was to follow the route my reconnaissance had taken three days previously, whilst the first Division was to move along the direct causeway through the surrounding marshes. General Montauban strove his best to dissuade Sir Hope Grant from moving at all, as the recent wet weather would, he said, have rendered the country deep and his men would suffer much in traversing it. However, Sir Hope was firm and General Montauban gave way unwillingly, but with a good grace.

The second Division started on the 12th from Peh-Tang at 4 a.m., and took about three hours in filing over the bridge that led from the town into the open country. As I had sketched the route to be followed, I was sent with Sir R. Napier to lead the column. Great difficulty was experienced in getting its guns through the marsh outside of Peh-Tang and west of the direct road, owing to the heavy rains of the two previous days. The first Division had not cleared from the town until a little after 10 a.m., at which time the French began to move.

As we neared the enemy's works at Simbo, about 11 a.m., a large body of from 2,000 to 3,000 Tartar cavalry rode pluckily with loud shouts making for our right. The Brigadier foolishly, I thought, formed his Brigade into Battalion squares. Had he received this irregularly delivered charge in line, as he ought to have done, he must have killed a large number of his assailants. However, they were caught by our native cavalry, who, charging into the thick of them, killed many, and drove the rest back at as fast a pace as that at which they had advanced. The first Division, moving by the

road on the causeway, deployed when about 1,400 yards from the enemy's entrenchments, upon which both French and English guns opened at a range of 1,000 yards. From where I was with the second Division, I saw all this in profile. There was a considerable body of the enemy's horse round their main entrenchments who suffered severely from the enfilading fire of our artillery, which their jingalls and matchlocks in vain endeavoured to suppress. Indeed, their fire did us little harm. When the second Division had reached the firm ground about three miles from the Peh-Tang Bridge, it deployed into fighting formation, with the cavalry on its right, and its artillery were soon in action. The practice of our new Armstrong guns delighted every one—except the Chinese. The Tartar cavalry then advanced boldly towards us in very open loose order, and though each shell seemed to burst amongst them we could see few riderless horses.

No men could have advanced under such a heavy fire more pluckily than they did, and I could not help thinking what splendid cavalry they would be under British officers! They came on in scattered parties until fairly near our cavalry, when with a loud wild yell they charged with much determination. Our two native cavalry regiments, led by Major, now General, Sir Dighton Probyn, V.C., and by Lieutenant Fane, were upon them at a gallop in a few minutes, supported by two magnificent squadrons of the King's Dragoon Guards. This was too much for even those brave Mongols, who soon turned and fled. Our pursuit lasted for five miles, and was then only ended because our horses were "pumped." They were in no galloping condition, having been long on board ship. The enemy, mounted on hardy ponies in good working condition, kept easily ahead of our

horsemen. The French and English troops then advanced and entered the pretty little town of Sin-Ho. About two and a half miles south-east of it, on the road to Taku, stood the village of Tang-ku. A narrow causeway connected it with Sin-Ho, the country to its north being at some places very swampy and almost impassable. Between it and the Pei-Ho River to the south the ground was firm and good.

By a reconnaissance made next morning it was ascertained that all the Tartar cavalry had retired to the right bank of the Pei-Ho by which the road to Pekin passes.

In Sin-Ho we found some interesting letters from the celebrated Tartar General Sang-ko-lin-sin to the Great Council of State as to the plans we might be expected to follow should we land an army near the mouth of the Pei-Ho. He had evidently had our parliamentary discussions upon the proposed war translated. His minute upon the discussion in Parliament upon our proposed war with China is an amusing commentary upon our usual mode of proceeding in all such matters. He remarks that the fact of our having then said so openly in public that we meant to invade Northern China was a clear proof that we had no such intention. He added, "those who make war keep silent regarding their proposed movements: everything is talked over and done in secret, the drums are muffled and no flags are shown." He gave us credit for more public wisdom in all questions of peace and war than we ever display. He showed his own military wisdom by saying that "should the barbarians persist in the avowed intention of invasion, they will most likely land at Peh-Tang: to do this is very difficult, but as we cannot defend the place they may succeed. He then proceeded to describe the difficulties we should encounter, and did so clearly and ably. He predicted the

course of events very much as they occurred, his only serious mistake being that he did not annihilate us, and that we chased from the field those whom he had commissioned to end our existence.

The next morning, August 13, I was sent out with some cavalry to reconnoitre up the river, but obtained little useful information.

The morning of August 14 was fine. We were under arms at 4 a.m., and the sky looked promising. The first few rays of the sun sparkled on our bayonets, and warmed us all pleasantly. The twelve French and twenty-four British guns opened fire upon the enemy's works round Tang-Koo at a range of about 900 yards, and soon silenced the fourteen Chinese guns opposed to them. Thereupon a party of the King's Royal Rifles, gallantly led by Lieutenant Shaw, contrived to effect an entrance into the place at the point where the enemy's works touched the river. Tang-Koo was soon ours, and the allied armies camped in and around Sin-Ho. This was a considerable success, achieved with little loss. There we halted six days to bring up the other heavy guns and ammunition we should require for the capture of the Taku Forts which defended the mouth of the river. It was in attacking them that Admiral Sir James Hope had met with his serious reverse in June the previous year, as already mentioned.

My work was constant in sketching ground, mapping the country, and making reconnaissances in all directions. This I enjoyed beyond measure. The weather was delightful, with cool, cloudy days and the nights sufficiently warm to make a bivouac pleasant. On August 16 I had been busy all day at some distance from the river. Upon returning to camp in the evening I found it under water from an unusually

high tide. Looking into my tent I found much of my extremely small kit floating about there. I did not enjoy my bed that night.

We now threw a bridge of boats across the Pei-Ho near Tang-Koo, half made by us and half by the French : a bad arrangement. It would have been much better to have drawn lots to decide which army should make it. A close reconnaissance of the Taku Forts was now made by the two allied Commanders-in-Chief. Sir Hope Grant was strongly of opinion that the capture of the forts on the northern or left bank of the river was the proper object to aim at. But General Montauban took the opposite view and pressed for the attack to be directed instead upon the great forts on the southern or right bank. I need not enter here upon any after-the-event discussion of the relative merits of the two plans. I content myself with saying that every member of the British Headquarter Staff agreed with our leader. By crossing the Pei-Ho to follow the French proposal we should place an unfordable river between us and our only base, that of Peh-Tang. But there were so many reasons for refusing to accept General Montauban's plan that I pass on, merely remarking that he thought it necessary to protest in a strongly worded minute of August 20 against Sir Hope Grant's scheme for the capture of the Taku Forts. In that document he said Sir Hope's plan was opposed to his ideas of the method of conducting this operation of war, and wound up as follows : " The object of my observations is, above all, to free myself from military responsibility with reference to my own Government in the event of its judging the question from the same point of view as that from which I myself regard it."

Sir Hope Grant answered it the same day, combating

General Montauban's arguments and adhering to the decision he had already arrived at.

Throughout this war the few troops furnished for it by France constituted a serious drag upon all our operations. We never derived any military benefit whatever from them, but I suppose the Ministers at home, who always have the best means of forming an opinion upon matters of foreign policy, deemed it advisable at that particular time to face the military drawbacks of the alliance for the international advantages it was hoped we should gain thereby. I spare my readers any learned exposition of the relative merits of the two plans for the taking of the Taku Forts. The matter is purely professional, and I shall only say that after a lapse of forty years I am as strongly of opinion now as I was in 1860 that Sir Hope Grant's plan was the true one, in fact the only sound one for that operation.

By the night of August 20 everything was ready for the attack of the northern fort—that nearest to us—which our general had selected as the key to the position. Sir Robert Napier—an old engineer officer—was of invaluable use to our Commander-in-Chief whilst these arrangements were being made, but the entire plan of operations was Sir Hope Grant's alone. With the eight heavy guns and three eight-inch mortars we had placed in position, and two Armstrong twelve-pounder batteries, two nine-pounder batteries and one rocket battery we opened fire at 5 a.m., August 21, the enemy answering with all the guns they could bring to bear upon our batteries. Amongst their guns were the two thirty-two pounders they had taken from our gunboats sunk upon the occasion of Admiral Sir James Hope's disastrous attack the previous year.

About 6 a.m., during what I may call the climax of the

artillery fire on both sides, a tall black pillar of smoke and rubbish shot up as if by magic in the fort upon which our fire was concentrated. It burst like a rocket shell upon attaining a considerable height, scattering around in all directions a shower of earth, planks and other wooden débris. This was followed by a very heavy, rumbling, booming sound. A large magazine had been exploded by our fire, and for a few moments the firing ceased on both sides, the common opinion being that all further resistance there was at an end. But we had reckoned without our host, for soon the Chinese batteries reopened all round. Half-an-hour later another explosion took place, but this time it was in the larger northern fort. By 7 a.m. we had silenced all the guns in the fort Sir Hope Grant had selected for attack, and he now felt the time had arrived to assault it. He accordingly ordered two battalions—one of the Essex the other of the York and Lancaster Regiments—to advance and attack. They moved straight for the gate of the fort, a French column on our right advancing towards the angle of the work where it rested upon the river. It had been unfortunately arranged that a strong party of the Royal Marines should carry on their shoulders a small infantry pontoon bridge previously put together and made ready for launching upon the outer wet ditch of the fort. This was a stupid proceeding on the part of our engineers, for it not only increased our loss and somewhat retarded our capture of the place, but it blocked up the only good road for our assaulting column. A round shot or large jingall bullet tore open one of these copper pontoons as the bridge was being carried by our men, and when laid down on the edge of the ditch it could not be launched until the injured pontoon, etc., had been removed. I was in a stooping position, on my

knees, busy helping its removal, when I heard some one immediately behind me say something. Looking up, I saw it was Gerald Graham, V.C., of the Royal Engineers, the most imperturbable of men, and an old comrade of mine in the trenches before Sebastopol.[1] Much over six feet in height, he was riding a tall horse, and to hear what he was saying amidst the general hubbub of shouts mingled with the noise and din of heavy firing, I stood up and put my hand upon his thigh to get my ear nearer to him. He said in the most ordinary tone, and without wincing, "Don't put your hand there, for I have just had a bullet through my thigh."

The rear face of the more northern of the two forts on the left bank of the Pei-Ho—that which we were attacking—was protected by two wet ditches twenty feet apart. Over them the road to the gateway of the fort passed by wooden bridges; that across the outer ditch had been removed, and the drawbridge over the inner ditch was "up." The gate itself had been recently blocked up with rows of strong timber, the ends well sunk in the ground. The parapet had been considerably thickened to "counter" what the Chinese deemed the mean advantage we had taken of attacking the rear instead of the front face of the work. The space between the two ditches was as closely planted

[1] I have more than once walked with him back to camp in the Crimea from some of our advanced parallels upon being relieved after a tour of trench duty, when from sheer laziness—it was a failing of his—he would make straight "across country" in the direction of the Middle Ravine picket. He preferred thus to expose himself to the fire of the Russian sharpshooters rather than take the trouble of following our line of trenches where he would have been screened from view. When with him upon such occasions I never relished the manœuvre, but apparently it did not occur to him that there was anything unusual in his proceeding.

with sharply pointed bamboo stakes as the wheat stalks of a stubble field.

The scramble over those two ditches was no child's play under the shower of missiles of all sorts, from "stinkpots" to cold roundshot, with which the Chinese plied their assailants. Fortunate indeed was the man who in the foremost ranks reached the foot of the parapet unhurt. Some men ran along the edge of the ditch searching for an easy point of passage, but others more daring and following their officer's example, plunged at once recklessly into the muddy water before them which in the middle reached their armpits. Even in the midst of all the turmoil at the moment, shouts of laughter greeted the poor devil who had the bad luck to sink for a moment in some chance hole as he pushed across. What danger is there in which the British soldier will not have his laugh? The narrow causeway to the Fort Gate was soon covered with killed and wounded, and the garrison seemed determined to fight to the last. It was slow work thus getting over those two ditches. Busy as I was at the outer ditch, my attention was attracted by seeing an officer with his sword in his mouth swarm up one of the side posts over the top of which passed the rope which held up the drawbridge of the inner ditch. It was my late "chum" in the Oudh campaign, the recklessly daring Augustus Anson, M.P. He was soon high enough to hack with his sword—and it was always sharp—at the rope, until down came the drawbridge with a crash. It had suffered severely from our fire, still many were able to crawl over its shaky timbers. This was a plucky, an heroic, feat on his part characteristic of the man. He had already won the Victoria Cross.

Our assaulting column was 2,500 strong ; the French were to have operated with 1,000 men but did not furnish 500. They attacked on our right, and though few in number nothing could exceed their daring gallantry. It was well said upon that occasion that their conduct was "worthy of the great nation to which they belonged." Their Chinese coolie corps carried the French scaling ladders, and to get over the wet ditches dry-foot our allies adopted an ingenious and amusing plan. They sent a number of these coolies into the middle of the ditch, and using them as a pier upon which they rested the ends of their scaling ladders, thus made a bridge of two spans over it, along which they scrambled.

After much labour on the part of all engaged, a considerable number of officers and private soldiers of both nations were soon gathered together under the steep outer slope of the parapet that enclosed the face of the fort we were attacking, and every minute increased that number. All attempts made by the French to place their ladders against that slope were met gallantly by the enemy, who hurled back both the ladders and the men upon them. However, determined men always succeed in war, and as soon as one ladder was thrown down our gallant allies replaced it by another. At last, a French soldier reached the top, and, bounding upon the parapet, tricolor in hand, he had just time to wave it and to hear it greeted by his comrades with a wild huzzah before he fell and his brave spirit had passed away into that better world where the souls of all such noble soldiers doubtless live for ever.

The first of either army actually inside the fort were two young subalterns, Rogers of the Essex,[1] and Burslem of

[1] Now Major-General Rogers, V.C., C.B.

the Hampshire Regiment, but both were driven out again, the former wounded. Chaplin, a subaltern of the Hampshire Regiment,[1] carrying the Queen's Colour, was, I believe, the first to place any national standard upon the captured work: he was wounded three times in doing so. But both the soldiers of France and England did so well that it would be impossible as well as invidious to attempt to draw any distinction whatever between their respective daring. The Chinese within the work, when we had forced our way in, fought to the last, and both French and English bayonets were freely used before all resistance ceased. The interior of the captured work presented a horrible scene of dead and dying Chinamen. I believe its garrison had been 500 men, of whom only 100 effected their escape. The two Chinese generals within the place were killed, one being the general in command of all the works on the left bank of the river. The fort we had taken was the key to the whole position on both banks, and General Montauban that evening must have wished he had never protested against its being made the first object of our attack. The large Chinese work lower down the river on the same bank was undefended, and upon entering it we saw huddled together in one part of it about 2,000 Chinese soldiers who had thrown away their military badges and assumed the attitude of peaceable citizens. They expected to be killed and were astonished when we told them they might go free. We afterwards learnt that our clemency had a great effect wherever this proceeding on our part became known.

It had been a trying morning and afternoon to all of us, and to those good friends our horses also. But now, to make matters worse, the very heavens seemed leagued

[1] Now Major-General Chaplin, V.C., C.B.

against us, and as one condition of that alliance to open their rain sluices upon the scene. I thought I heard the sound of their working machinery in the bursts of thunder which broke around on every side and shook the heavens and the earth as they did so. Upon me a very heavy downpour in every locality and under all circumstances has a saddening effect: at sea, on land, in the high mountains and amongst the abodes of men in well cultivated plains it is always the same. But there, in a deadly level mud-flat only a very few feet above high-tide mark, where no tree or patch of grass was to be seen, nor any abode of man beyond the low, flat-roofed mud dwellings of the peasant, this overflowing, drowning rainfall with its thunder chorus and its lightning accompaniment made most of us sad and weary. I know I felt poor at heart, and even the remembrance of our brilliant success that day was not sufficient to cheer me up.

In war, the weather certainly affects the spirits very much. Privations and discomfort in the fine weather of a soft pleasant climate have little effect upon the well constituted masculine mind and spirits. But wet clothes and damp surroundings and mud and dirt, with hunger and nasty food, soon convert privations which should be joy into sheer misery. As I stood wet, tired, sleepy and hungry upon the lofty cavalier of the larger of the two northern forts and looked around upon the surrounding expanse of mud and dirty pools, with a yellow river flowing through black slimy banks, I thought it would be difficult to find in nature any scene more essentially hideous. The road by which we had reached the forts was entirely submerged for long distances, and its few uncovered spots were deep in mire and slush. Even the most naturally cheery amongst us felt depressed, notwithstanding our victory, as we straggled back to our wet

tents. All of us had been up long before daylight, and had during the day eaten but little, and that little "on the thumb," as our allies would have said. With empty stomachs, very sleepy and both tired and weary, that ride of five miles back to camp is not one of my pleasantest recollections. The road—may I call it a road!—was so slippery that our tired and hungry horses could with difficulty keep their legs. Upon reaching camp I found it had been inundated during our absence, but that the flood was now receding. It had, however, overflowed the little mound a careful servant had raised round my tent to keep it dry. That mound now acted as a dyke to keep the water in and had converted my tent into a pond, some four inches deep. I shall never forget the sadness that fell upon me as I saw my pet pair of easy old camp shoes floating about that pond. On my dreary way, my feet clad in the saturated and clinging boots I had been in since 4 a.m. I had pictured to myself the luxury of changing them for those shoes which I calculated upon finding dry and comfortable. As I looked round my tent, here and there portions of less buoyant articles showed themselves above the flood, reminding me that most of my property was below its surface. The night was pitch dark. There was very little to burn and that little was saturated. No efforts could kindle a fire, indeed, it was with difficulty I lit the candle that stood in a bottle upon my camp table. I was hungry and devoured some ration biscuit and stuff from a tin canister that was labelled "beef." Wet through, with no dry change, but very tired, I lay down happy after this frugal supper, for had we not taken those far-famed Taku Forts!

I learnt next morning that the Chinese Governor-General, after a long conference with Mr. Parkes, had surrendered

the southern forts and all the country up the Pei-Ho as far as Tien-tsin, together with that city itself. The end seemed —I thought then—fast approaching: but, like all those around me, I was wrong.

Writing home from Tang-Koo on August 24, 1860, I said what all then believed to be the case, that "the third China War is over, and all that we fought for in a military point of view is obtained." I give here a copy of the official sketch I had made of the general position and which I had had lithographed for distribution, previous to our attack on August 21. "You may perceive," I wrote in my letter, "that all beyond this village of Tang-Koo is dotted in on the plan, indicating that it had not been accurately surveyed, as this was impossible when I drew it. The other parts of the sketch I surveyed carefully and it was generally considered to be very satisfactory. Copies of it are being sent home to all the chief military officials by this mail, but as drawings of this nature done by officers of the Quarter-Master-General's department belong to the State, I do not wish any public use to be made of it.

"I wrote home from Peh-Tang telling you we were to begin operations on the 12th inst., as Sir Hope Grant was determined, come what might, not to run the great risks attendant upon keeping the large force we had at Peh-Tang cooped up in that small and unsanitary town. Although the French were strongly opposed to a forward move at so early a date, our general was determined to postpone the forward movement no longer. He told the French that if they were not ready to move by that date he should operate alone, as our force was sufficiently strong to enable us to do without any assistance from them. Under these circumstances, General Montauban

was forced to comply, though he did so unwillingly, saying he would only send forward part of his troops.

"Two reconnaissances had been made of the enemy's position and of the ground near it: one was made by a French general on the 3rd, the other on the 9th inst., by 'Lieutenant-Colonel Wolseley,' the latter being, I flatter myself, the more successful of the two. From the information I collected and by marching over the ground myself, I found that at a few miles distance from Peh-Tang the ground was sufficiently hard for the movements of cavalry and artillery. Our Commander-in-Chief therefore determined upon turning the enemy's left with all his cavalry and one division of infantry, whilst the other infantry division and whatever force the French might supply should march direct along the causeway towards the enemy's entrenched position in front of the village of Sinho.

"Unfortunately the 11th was a wet day, but still our general was determined to move if possible on the following morning, so at 4 a.m. on the 12th we were all under arms, and filing over the narrow bridge which is the only outlet from Peh-Tang. I must tell you that a few hours of heavy rain make the whole country here impassable for man and beast. There is not a stone of any sort in this district, so the roads, which are all of clay, although good when baked hard by the sun, are impracticable for wheeled carriages when they are rendered soft by rain. The morning of the 12th was far from promising. The sky was covered with dark leaden-looking clouds, and a light drizzling rain fell now and then, so that instead of taking about a couple of hours to get all the force clear of the place, it took six, as some of the waggons having stuck irretrievably in the mud delayed every one in the rear, as a

matter of course, on that narrow causeway. It was very hard work getting over the first two miles of the route taken by Sir R. Napier's division, with which I was sent by the Commander-in-Chief, because I had a good knowledge of the country in that direction, having been over it during my reconnaissance on the 9th. With many a struggle my horse carried me through the mud for the first few miles.

"At about 11 a.m. we came into action, and Sir R. Napier's division was soon almost enveloped by clouds of the enemy's cavalry advancing steadily upon us in their own irregular fashion. They seemed to take little heed of the heavy fire we kept up on them from fifteen field guns, whilst about twenty more were in action on our left, pitching into the centre of their fortified position. These twenty guns were with the first division, with which Sir H. Grant then was. The enemy's cavalry came close up to us, and a few straggling parties even charged our cavalry and guns. Our horsemen were at last let loose, and, bursting in upon them, pursued them for about five miles. But as our horses were in bad wind from long confinement on board ship, we did not cut up more than a few hundred of them at the outside. Still, the impression of our superiority as soldiers was made, and they acknowledged it by their flight.

"The fire of our heavy guns with the first division soon told upon the enemy's works in front of Sinho, towards which the enemy began to retreat. When Sir Hope saw this, our infantry were ordered to advance in line, but upon entering the enemy's entrenchments we found only dead and dying men and horses. Our two infantry divisions and the cavalry brigade met close to Sinho, a nice little village surrounded by neatly kept gardens. Leading down from it in a south-easterly direction, was a long causeway with a canal on each side,

at the end of which stood Tang-Koo, the village from which I write this letter. Around it, a long line of entrenchments had been constructed which covered it on three sides, the fourth side being protected by the Pei-Ho. General Montauban, evidently a little surprised at our rapid success, was now all for pushing on at once to attack Tang-Koo forthwith. But as the only road leading to it was the narrow causeway already mentioned, which was swept by the enemy's guns, Sir Hope most wisely refused positively to advance further until he had thrown bridges over the canals bordering it. They would enable him to deploy to the right or left as he might require. The ground between the causeway and the river was hard, and promised to be the best line for a further advance.

"General Montauban fussed and fumed so that at last our Commander-in-Chief said to him, 'Pray don't allow my refusal to advance at once to prevent your going on with your own troops.' The Frenchman jumped at the idea, and, accepting the offer with eagerness, soon put his troops—who by this time had come up—in motion along the Tang-Koo causeway, his artillery in front. When he came within gunshot of the enemy's works he began an artillery duel with the Chinaman at long bowls which he carried on for some time. The determination of our allies soon oozed out, and they returned before long, having done nothing more than expend some gun ammunition most uselessly. We all bivouacked for the night where we were; few had even a blanket. I had nothing but what I stood in, good cord breeches and hessian boots, which although the best dress in the world for day work are not, if made to fit closely, by any means the most agreeable costume for 'soft repose.' Close by where we bivouacked

were immense stacks of hay and straw, so that after all neither I nor my horse fared at all badly. Indeed, until the heavy dews wet me through towards morning, I slept better than I had done for several days.

"The next morning—August 13, 1860—I was sent out with some cavalry to reconnoitre up the river, but I could obtain no information worth having. By the evening of the 13th all was ready or in train for the attack on Tang-Koo, and two bridges were thrown across the canals to enable us to get guns on to the firm ground lying to the south of the causeway leading to that place from Sinho. During the night a large working party threw up a trench at 480 yards from the enemy's works, which I have marked *A* in the plan. Thence we could worry John Chinaman well with our rifles. The weather, which had off and on been bad ever since we landed at Peh-Tang on the 1st until we left that place on the 12th, was now lovely; fine clear days with a clouded sky like that of England, thus affording good protection from the sun to those who were all day exposed to its rays: no ill effects were therefore experienced from that great Eastern enemy of Europeans. Our nights were just pleasantly cool, and when in a tent one blanket over you at night was comfortable. Strange to say, during our stay at Peh-Tang it rained regularly every third day, and the rule had held good also for some days before we landed. In consequence, many predicted that the 14th would not be an exception to this local law of nature, the 11th having been very wet. I am glad to say the weatherwise, and those who had formulated laws upon imperfect observations of nature, were wrong in this instance: their prophecies were delusive.

"We were all under arms about 4 a.m. on the 14th;

the sky looked very promising; the day dawned upon us bright and glad. The first few rays of the sun sparkled on our bayonets and warmed us all pleasantly. The sight was fine as day broke upon our preparations for attack, and was calculated to rouse the spirits of even the most phlegmatic amongst us. It is moments such as these that repay us soldiers for the many inevitable hardships and disappointments experienced in all campaigns, although they seldom figure in the published narratives of such events; they are generally kept well in the background. They are ignored by the author, who wishes to throw a golden hue over the camp scenes he describes, and to surround the soldier's life with a halo in the brilliancy of which all that is disagreeable is lost to sight.

"Our troops were quickly in their places. With the guns in front we made up a total of twenty-four, and the French had twelve more. The French, who were on our left, rested their left on the Sinho-Tang-Koo causeway: we were on their right and rested our extreme right on the Pei-Ho. The troops of the two allied nations thus formed one long line, filling up the space between the causeway and the river. From the little village with the long name marked on the plan as having had some junks burned there, the Celestials opened their first fire upon us from a couple of guns: we replied with six, but did not succeed in silencing them for some time, and, before we did silence them, they had opened from another battery lower down marked *B*. A few of our sailors with a small boat managed to land near the first battery, and, finding it deserted, spiked the guns and set fire to the junks there, these last forming almost a part of the battery.

"August 27. I have been so interrupted and have so much surveying and drawing to do, that I have not had time to finish this letter before. All yesterday, from early morn until late, I was drawing; I had to make two large plans (four inches to the mile), one for His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, and the other for the Quarter-Master-General at home. Every moment not engaged in drawing was spent in surveying: everything had to be done against time to be ready for the post to England which closed here last night.

"I am the only officer at headquarters who can draw, so my hands are always full. Then dear old General Grant is a terrible man for plans and sends copies to all sorts of people. Fortunately for me I got the enclosed little sketch struck off in our press, and have thus saved myself much labour. It was, however, so badly done that making the necessary corrections in the copies struck off takes up a considerable amount of time.

"I shall now resume my narrative where I left it. After the Chinese batteries on the right bank of the Pei-Ho were well accounted for, and the French—who were late—had come up—the whole line advanced, the second English division remaining in rear as a reserve. The advancing line consisted of a line of battalion columns. When we had reached within about 1,000 yards of the enemy's entrenchments we opened by a heavy fire upon those parts of the enemy's works where their batteries were and from which they were firing upon us. Our artillery practice was beautiful; nothing could be better than the accuracy with which our Armstrong guns fired. Our skirmishers in the trench on our right did their best to pick off the Chinese gunners, but notwith-

standing all the uncomfortable missiles we brought to bear upon them, they still stuck to their guns like men ; although they made shockingly bad practice, their pluck was undeniable, and would have done credit to the best disciplined troops of Europe. On the extreme left of their entrenchments, where they rested on the Pei-Ho, the place we had selected for our attack, there was a Chinese battery which the long-tailed gentlemen served manfully until gun after gun was knocked over or broken by our heavy fire ; by degrees we advanced our guns towards the enemy's entrenchments until at last they were only about 400 yards from them. Our infantry was then brought to the front, and in about five minutes the Union Jack of England was flying from the top of the walls.

"Our assaulting column had to scramble over a wet canal with extremely muddy and slippery sides. Just close to the river there was a spot where the advance was made with greater ease; at other places the ditch to be crossed in our front would have required bridges. Our allies the French were all this time pegging away with their guns at the gateway on the causeway. They had to throw a bridge over the two wet ditches which lay between them and the Chinese works. We were inside for a good ten minutes before the French tricolour was hoisted up and their firing had ceased. When we entered the place the enemy bolted ; some threw themselves into the river and tried to swim across, and a few succeeded ; others crossed in boats. The bulk of their force, however, was to be seen streaming along the causeway which I have marked on the plan as leading down towards Takoo, where they used to have a boat bridge across the river. We could do no more that day, as immediately beyond us lay the

strong forts, said to be impregnable, from which a heavy fire opened upon all who approached them.

"Sir H. Grant determined to await the arrival of his heavy guns from Peh-Tang, and to bring up ten days' provision before he moved any further from his base of supplies. This was very necessary, for in the event of bad weather our line of communications with the rear would have become impracticable even for horses, so easily is this extremely flat country flooded by even a few hours' heavy rain.

"I do not think I mentioned that during our advance on the 12th a few of our men who were straggling in rear were cut off by the Tartar cavalry. The party that fell into the enemy's hands consisted of two men of the British infantry, who were doing duty with the Chinese coolie corps, about fifteen or sixteen of these coolies and a couple of Madras sappers. Strange to say, these men, or rather most of them, were returned to us under a flag of truce between the 15th and the 20th. One of the English soldiers, the Chinamen said, had died, also one of the Madras sappers. The coolies had had their tails cut off and the English soldier sent back had evidently had his hands tied tightly with cords. His story was extremely vague: indeed, when his evidence was taken, he was still so much under the influence of excitement and fear that we could make nothing out of him. He said, however, that the other man had been killed because he would not go through the customary Chinese ceremony of kow-towing to the great mandarin when taken into his presence. This ceremony consists—as I daresay you know—in knocking your forehead nine times against the ground. This story of the soldier I believe to be untrue, the fact being that this party, who

were in charge of some rum kegs, having nearly all become drunk, began to straggle and were thus taken prisoners. One coolie escaped at the time, whose story corroborated this view of the affair: he said that one of the two soldiers had died from the effects of drink.

"From August 15 to 20 every one was busy at getting up stores from the rear. The road between the army and Peh-Tang was constantly covered with every sort of cart, baggage animals, etc., all struggling to the front with baggage, big guns, ammunition, forage, etc., etc. A boat bridge was begun at *D*, across the Pei-Ho, as the French were all for operating on the right bank of the river. When Sir Hope Grant announced his intention of attacking the north forts and taking them first, General Montauban was very wroth, doing all in his power to try and dissuade him from the operation. The whole French staff were also much excited on the subject, and propounded fine axioms and theories of war, to all of which, as also at last to General Montauban's official remonstrance against our proposed plan, Sir Hope Grant, to my delight, turned a deaf ear. His remonstrance really amounted to saying that he did not want the French at all, and was quite prepared to take the forts by himself. The French general could not, of course, agree to his doing this, so he replied that, 'having placed his remonstrance against the English general's plan on record he was prepared to accompany and assist his ally with troops.'

"Up to August 20, my time was mostly spent in making reconnaissances, and in proceeding with my survey, which, extending over many miles of country, was a work of time and labour. Meantime all the civilian newspaper writers and other hangers on about the camp, amateurs and people of that sort, were daily crying out, 'Oh, why don't we push

on'; 'the forts would fall at once if attacked'; 'You might take them with a hundred men'—and all sorts of similar rubbish in which those who have no responsibility and who take no part in the fighting themselves are always so fond of indulging. Always on such occasions they are ready with grumblings of this nature: even Lord Elgin, who joined the camp on the 19th, seemed to think our delay was absurd, so confident were all those supposed to be well versed in Chinese manners and customs that we should have no difficulty in taking the forts.

"Against all this clamour Sir Hope held his own, treating it with the contempt it deserved. It was a trying position to be placed in, with this growling crowd round him calling out for an immediate advance, whilst the French on the other hand condemned and protested against his plan of operations. Sir Hope stuck to his own original plan, and no man was ever better repaid than he has been for his firmness. On August 19 and 20 our engineers were employed in making the road leading out of Tang-Koo, which I have marked on the plan. It had to be taken across all sorts of bad ground, besides a great number of deep canals connected with the salt works surrounding the place. On the night of the 20th our batteries marked on the plan were thrown up, and the second division was moved down to be ready for work the following morning. The enemy kept throwing fire balls all through the night, which reminded one of Cremorne, but being very indifferent shots they did not profit much thereby.

"On the morning of the 21st, as soon as day broke, about 4.30 a.m., our batteries opened fire, the enemy firing well in return. I forgot to mention that Admiral Hope had written officially to our general asking him if he con-

sidered it necessary that the gunboats should go in at the same time, adding that to do so 'would entail a great loss of life.' This the wily sailor did, we thought, not from dislike to losing men, but simply because he wished to throw the responsibility of any loss that might be incurred upon our general, believing that Sir Hope Grant would say that he wished the gunboats to co-operate in the attack. Sir Hope's reply must have been disappointing, for he answered officially that he was quite prepared to take the forts by himself. However, the gunboats drawn up in line made their appearance off the forts at daybreak on the 21st, keeping, however, well out of range, only two English and two French gunboats opening fire on the forts.

"By 6 a.m. two large magazines in the forts we were attacking exploded, one in the large fort and the other in the small one on the north bank. Our fire was maintained steadily until nearly 8 a.m., when the guns of the fort marked *K*, which bore directly on us, were all silenced, although the defenders still kept up a heavy fire from jingalls and small wall pieces. Our infantry then advanced under a heavy fire of musketry opened upon us from the walls. I give you on the back of the plan a rough sketch showing the defences in profile at the point where our columns attacked. We attacked the fort in the rear where the Chinamen had not constructed formidable works like those they had thrown up towards the sea, where they expected to be attacked. The leading men of the storming parties had to get across the two wet ditches, half swimming and half scrambling. The French attacked at a less formidable point than we did: we attacked at the gate where there was a drawbridge, the French made for the south-west corner of the fort, where the fire was naturally less heavy than elsewhere, as they were thus opposite a salient

angle unprovided with any flank defence. The French got across the second ditch before our men, on whom the heavy fire was telling, so much so that when I went up with our small pontoons to help to form a bridge across the first ditch, I could scarcely get along the small narrow causeway which led to it owing to the number of our dead and wounded who lay on the road. The dead I was obliged to have thrown off the road on to the banks at its side to clear a path for the party carrying the pontoons. A round shot then went through one of these pontoons, causing some delay, and the first men over the outer ditch were some time before they could cut the rope of the drawbridge over the inner ditch ; the consequence was that our men, crowded together along the narrow causeway, were exposed to a very nasty fire.

" By this time the French had got some few ladders under the walls, but as fast as they placed them for mounting the defenders inside knocked them down, and they kept throwing six and twelve-pounder shot, which are unpleasant missiles even when thrown with the hand if they light on the top of the head. However, determined men are not to be kept back in this fashion, and every second saw the numbers under the walls increased. Indeed, it was the safest place to be in, as no fire could reach there, and, barring the cold shot thrown over by hand, nothing could well touch you. Whilst the storming parties were thus struggling across the two wet ditches, our Armstrong guns were making admirable practice just a few feet over our heads, actually knocking the wall about so that portions of it fell upon our men's heads. At last a French drummer struggled up a ladder and reached the top, where he waved a tricolour and gave a loud cheer. It was taken up by all outside, but before it ceased the poor plucky boy fell, shot dead. Just

at the same moment, the young ensign carrying the Queen's Colours of the 67th Regiment (the storming regiment), having got through the wet ditch as best he could, followed by a few men, scrambled up the woodwork near the gate and so on to the parapet, and then shook out the colour he was carrying. The few men behind him could only follow by twos and threes; still all in rear pressed on, and if the French colours waved a few seconds first on the walls, ours was the first in the fort and on the one large raised cavalier forming part of the front face of the work (we had attacked the fort in rear). A long ramp or slope led up this cavalier, the top of which was covered with the enemy. The young ensign referred to and a few men charged up this slope in amongst the defenders, who succeeded in shooting him in two or three places. Our bayonets, however, soon cleared them out, and the work was ours, all having behaved most gallantly; indeed, it is difficult to say whether English, French or Chinamen earned and deserved the most honour: I should be inclined to give the palm to the last named.

"The poor wretched Chinamen, as they bolted out of the fort to try and reach the river, or the other fort beyond, were shot down in numbers; some, falling on the bamboo spikes placed round the outside of the work to strengthen it, were impaled upon them, and many were drowned in the ditches. There were about 200 dead Chinamen lying in and about the fort, and for a long distance away we could see the wounded trying to drag their broken limbs after them, and the river is still most offensive from the number of dead floating about in it. I estimate the enemy's loss in this first fort at over 1,000, for numbers of the defenders were buried by the explosion when their principal magazine blew up early in the morning, and most of their wounded had been

carried off during the fight. The Chinese general who commanded in the fort was killed, and they say themselves they have suffered severely.

"Immediately after the fall of the place, I was sent forward with a small guard to reconnoitre the ground between it and the further northern fort. Of course it was my business to go up as near as I could get to the further work; not a pleasant mission to be engaged on, for if you go up close you are safe to be shot in such a dead level country, where there is no cover whatever, and if you do not go up close you can see or learn next to nothing. Under such circumstances I always use my own discretion, and risk nothing more than I believe to be necessary for the due performance of my task. In this instance my business was to obtain information as to the nature of the ground between the two forts, and of what the defences of the further forts consisted.

"I advanced by myself, desiring my guard to keep a couple of hundred yards behind me, scattered about in skirmishing order, so as to avoid the effects of the fire as much as possible. I had reached a point within about four or five hundred yards of the work when, to my surprise, the enemy suddenly ceased to fire upon me and my party. Upon looking round, I saw white flags hoisted on all the forts, and our guns at once ceased firing also. This was a grand opportunity for me to spy out the information I required, so I walked steadily up to the ditch of the fort and made a sketch of the defences. The place was swarming with men who kept shouting at me and evidently by their signs warning me off the premises. At last they sent out a man with a white flag, and our garrison in the fort we had taken sent an interpreter to meet them, and to ask what was wanted. The only answer we could obtain was, that the

commandant had hoisted a white flag because the forts on the south bank had done so, but that he could not surrender the place without orders from his superior. A boat then came across the river with letters for Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, but sending no message to the general. A message was therefore sent back by us to say that unless the forts were surrendered by 11 a.m. our guns would reopen. When this message was sent to the fort immediately in our front, summoning it to surrender, the fellow who met our flag of truce was most cheeky. He said he would not give up the fort, and that if we were able we had better come and take it. Our guns were then hauled into position and our troops pushed forward to the ground marked *L* : all was being prepared for another struggle, when a message arrived from Governor-General Ho, who is the highest functionary in these parts, asking to negotiate. As 11 a.m. drew near and no fire was opened upon us, it seemed as if the garrison had vacated the fort in front of us. Our troops consequently pushed on and entered it. There were still some 2,000 of the garrison huddled together in a corner of the work, but with no military badge about them, and nothing to distinguish them from any ordinary Chinese peasant.

"That evening the south forts were vacated, and next morning our messenger returned from Mr. Ho, saying he surrendered everything. And so ends the third China War, and also this hurried letter, of which I am thoroughly ashamed, but I send it, nevertheless, as I presume you will think it is better than no letter at all. I could write for another hour if I had time, but I have not. I must try to smuggle this into the mail bag somehow or other. This letter is of course strictly private, as also the enclosed plan.

"(Signed) G. J. WOLSELEY."

WE MARCH UPON TIEN-TSIN

No time was lost in pushing forward our army to Tien-tsin and every one was overjoyed to leave the salt flats and hideous neighbourhood we had been in since landing. Tien-tsin had lately been surround with a great line of works that must have entailed a vast amount of labour, as they were at least fourteen miles in circumference, extending above and below the city to both banks of the river. The Grand Canal there joins the Pei-Ho.

Two imperial commissioners of high rank reached it from Pekin a few days after our arrival. Peace was said by all our own "politicals" to be a certainty, and we soldiers began to speculate as to the date when we should reach home.[1] But it soon transpired that Lord Elgin had been taken in, for when pressed for their imperial instructions to treat with us, they had none to produce. Our ambassador resolved therefore to push on to Tung-chow, and announced he would receive no imperial messenger until he had reached that place. A battalion of the Royal Scots and one of the York and Lancaster Regiment, with some guns, reached Tien-tsin on August 25, and our cavalry brigade the day following; the first division on September 2, and the second division on the 5th of that month. By papers subsequently captured we discovered that the Emperor never intended these negotiations to lead to anything important,

[1] In a published letter from Tien-tsin of August 26, 1860, to his wife, Mr. Parkes wrote:

"We marched out of Peh-Tang on the 12th and we marched into Tien-Tsin on the 25th, and I do not now expect to hear another gun fired. Imperial commissioners are posting down from Pekin, and with proper management on our part, diplomacy, which will now come into play, will, we should hope, be as successful as the sword."

All our diplomats throughout this war were too sanguine, and their over confidence in the near approach of peace, with a less determined general at the head of our army, might have led to our destruction.

his object being merely to gain time. They fondly hoped to prolong negotiations into the cold weather, believing that our constitutions would not stand their winter. Our abortive negotiations afforded us soldiers much amusement. We all asked why our diplomats had not demanded that these sham commissioners should produce their written credentials immediately upon their arrival.

On September 8 our troops began to move towards Tung-chow, distant from Tien-tsin by road between sixty-five and seventy miles, and nearly twenty miles from Pekin. The French, about 3,000 strong, started two days later, Transport was our one serious difficulty, but we had obtained from the Chinese authorities in Tien-tsin a large number of good carts drawn by two or three mules each.

I was now given the detached duty of reconnoitring and mapping the country as we advanced. There were no natural features to be sketched, except the Pei-Ho, which twisted about in a most wriggling fashion. The country was, in fact, a dead level, covered chiefly with standing maize and millet, both of which grew to a height of about eight or nine feet. I was given as an escort a small party of Punjaubee cavalry under a native officer, Mr. Swinhoe, of our Chinese consular service as an interpreter, and Lieutenant, now General Sir R. Harrison, K.C.B., as an assistant. He was an excellent assistant, an admirable officer and a right good fellow all round. It was a pleasure to have such a gentleman with me. For the use of myself and party I was allowed so many mule carts with their Chinese drivers. I made them over to the care of my native officer, telling him that his chance of reaching the far-famed City of Pekin depended upon the strictness of the watch he kept over them.

In the early morning, before we began our second march

from Tien-tsin, I heard a considerable commotion in camp, and upon inquiring the cause was told that every Chinese driver had decamped during the violent thunderstorm and heavy downpour of the preceding night. I sent for my duffadar of cavalry and said, " Are your mules and drivers safe ? " With a broad grin he answered, " Yes, sahib." Mine were, I found, the only drivers and hired mules in camp. Subsequently I asked him what measures he had taken to secure them. He said, " You told me, sahib, you would hold me responsible for the mules and drivers, so at nightfall I collected the drivers in my tent, tied all their pigtails together, and fastened the knot thus formed to my tent pole, beside which I slept." Afterwards, whenever these drivers had occasion to go about the lines, I found he sent with them a sowar with his tulwar drawn. They really behaved very well, and I know the others had bolted simply because they dared not disobey the order to do so they had received from the Tien-tsin authorities, from whom, by the bye, we had obtained the mules and drivers in question.

CHAPTER XXX

Chinese Perfidy—Sir Harry Parkes and others Treacherously taken Prisoners

MANY attempts were made by the Pekin Government in the hope of inducing us to fall back upon Tien-tsin and negotiate there. They must indeed have thought we were simple people when they made such a proposal after their many previous attempts to deceive us. They even requested us to leave our guns behind, alleging they would "disturb the minds of the inhabitants" if we took them near "the great capital."

On September 13 we reached Ho-see-Woo, which is about half-way between Tien-tsin and Pekin. The country round it is undulating, prosperous, well cultivated, and pleasant to look upon. The villages we passed through were well built, and surrounded with nice gardens and orchards, which supplied us with quantities of very fine grapes and vegetables of many kinds. At first the people were extremely civil, bringing in their garden produce for sale. But upon nearing Ho-see-Woo their attitude changed. They fled at our approach, and we found that town practically deserted. Notwithstanding the help afforded us by the river as a line of communication as far as Ho-see-Woo, the transport difficulties in front were very serious. But the Imperial commissioner, the Prince

of E. and his colleagues seemed so bent upon peace it was difficult to believe there was any more fighting yet in store for us. To ease our supply difficulties the second division was consequently halted at Tien-tsin.

At Ho-see-Woo other messengers from Pekin reached the allied embassies, bringing despatches stating the terms upon which the Pekin Government said they would make peace. Some days were lost in settling how far the two armies should advance, and where the ambassadors were to be housed pending the signing of the treaty. It was at last arranged that the allied armies should advance to the neighbourhood of Chang-kia-wan, and there halt in a position the mandarins were to point out.

On September 16 Messrs. Parkes and Loch went on to Tung-chow to prepare for Lord Elgin's reception there, Colonel Walker and a commissariat officer going with them to arrange details as to the camps and the supplies we should require. At that large city Mr. Parkes had a long interview with the Prince of E., one of the highest dignitaries in the empire. The lying promises of this great prince apparently took in Mr. Parkes, and all the embassy civilians were so cock-sure of peace that our army Headquarters accepted their announcement on the point.

According to negotiations now entered into by Lord Elgin it was arranged that the army should halt about two miles short of Chang-kia-wan, whence he was to push on to Tungchow with 1,000 men. There the terms of peace were to be finally settled, and when that was accomplished, he, with the same escort, was then to enter Pekin and ratify our old treaty. For none of these diplomatic arrangements were the military authorities in any way whatever responsible.

Upon September 17 our army and 1,000 French troops reached Matow, where most satisfactory reports were received from Mr. Parkes. Upon the strength of these assurances the army was ordered to march about fifteen miles next morning to Chang-kia-wan, which was about the same distance from Pekin.

Our diplomatic comrades were so certain that peace was only a matter of hours that, as I had some sketching work to do in the neighbourhood, I told Sir Hope I should like, with his permission, to stay for a few hours behind when the army marched next morning at daybreak as usual. All round my own small camp the maize though ripe was still standing, but as the army advanced next morning the corn was found cut in all directions. This was regarded as somewhat ominous on the part of an enemy whose army consisted chiefly of cavalry, and the feeling was strengthened by our advanced guard coming suddenly upon a Tartar picket, who galloped off when they saw us.

Whilst my breakfast was being prepared in the early morning of September 18, I saw the rear guard pass by and take up a position in a little village about a couple of miles beyond. This was evidently done to let the baggage get well forward under its protection. It must have been about 7 a.m., whilst all my party were at breakfast, that a captain of the King's Dragoon Guards rode up to say he had been sent by the officer commanding the rear guard to tell me he had received orders to halt where he was for the present, as things did not look satisfactory in front. He wished me to be on my guard lest I might possibly be cut off. I sent back my best thanks to the rear guard commander for his kindness, etc., but I had

been so thoroughly led to believe in peace by our diplomatists, that I fear the tone of my voice was not in tune with my expressions of gratitude. The Dragoon galloped off and I finished my tea. Whilst I was doing so the native officer of my escort came to report the presence of a large force of the enemy's cavalry close by. He drew my attention to the column of dust they created as they moved through the very high standing maize which, in that extremely flat region, formed our horizon on all sides. I understood the position in an instant, and called out "Pull down your tent poles." The high standing corn then protected us from view, and all was got ready in haste for a start. With the exception of the Chinese drivers all my party were well mounted, for our servants rode our spare horses. I found that a very considerable body of Tartar cavalry was moving between us and the village where our rear guard was halted. The possibility of having to sacrifice our baggage and ride for our lives seemed so imminent that I filled my pockets and holster-pipes with our road surveys and sketches, determined—come what might—not to lose the result of so much care and labour. We all stood to our horses, ready to mount in a moment. But the eyes of the enemy were evidently so fixed upon our rear guard that they passed without discovering us, as we were fairly protected from their view by the tall, standing crops. We were soon packed up and *en route*, and it was not long before we and our impedimenta had joined the rear guard of the army. Leaving my carts there we pushed to the front with all speed, and I soon joined Sir Hope Grant. I found his progress barred by a large hostile army that covered a front of about five miles. Large bodies of Mongolian horsemen were to be

seen closing in towards our flanks, and great batteries of guns in front soon became visible. The whole position had been evidently carefully prepared as an ambuscade in which it was expected to destroy us. But Sir Hope had had too long an experience in Eastern trickery and treachery to fall into such a trap.

On that same morning Mr. Parkes in Tung-chow had discovered, from the altered tone in which the Prince of E. spoke to him, that some treachery was being planned, and that the enemy meant to fight. One is prone to say—as most of us soldiers did at the time—why did not Mr. Parkes perceive this at an earlier date? It is easy to be wise after events, but it must be admitted that under the circumstances there are few civilian diplomatists who would not have been similarly taken in. In treating with barbarian nations during a war all negotiations should be carried on by the general in command of the army. Indeed the one great lesson I learnt from this Chinese campaign was that in most wars, certainly in a war like that of 1860 in China, the general to command the army and the ambassador to make peace should be one and the same man. To separate the two functions is, according to my experience, folly gone mad. But it is usually found desirable to invent well-paid and high-sounding offices for noble lords in want of employment. The general who is not capable of making a treaty of peace such as that Lord Elgin had to make in 1860 is not fit to have supreme command in any war. I think I may say that none of the best known commanders in ancient or modern times would have been taken in as Lord Elgin was by the Chinese ministers he had to deal with throughout this campaign. Can we imagine a Caesar, a Clive, a Napoleon, a Welling-

ton, an Outram suffering such clouds of dust to be thrown in their eyes by an enemy proverbial for lying and want of faith. Whilst feigning an earnest desire for peace all through the attendant negotiations, these Chinese diplomatists were plotting to hem us in gradually and to destroy us by overwhelming military forces? Had Sir Hope Grant been our ambassador as well as Commander-in-Chief, I am confident the Chinese ministers would not have been able to take in a man so long accustomed to deal with Easterns as he was.

When Mr. Parkes and all his party were allowed to leave Tung-chow on the morning of September 18 they made for Chang-kia-Wan in haste. They reached it without molestation, but were followed by a party of Tartar horse until half-way between that city and our troops, when they were stopped. Mr. Parkes was then taken before Sang-ko-lin-sin, dragged from his horse, made to kow-tow, and his face rubbed in the dust at the feet of that Tartar savage. The sowar who was with Mr. Parkes at the time brought down his lance to the "charge" upon the first sign of violence by the Chinese soldiers, and was with difficulty restrained from fighting. "Oh, sahib," as he afterwards said when released, "if we had only charged it would have been all right."

Just before the battle opened Mr. Loch, with three sowars, galloped in from the Chinese army, bringing a letter from Mr. Parkes announcing that everything had been satisfactorily arranged with the Imperial commissioners. But Mr. Loch's own story did not corroborate that statement. He said that in company with Colonel Walker, Mr. Parkes, our commissariat officer, five men of the King's Dragoon Guards, and four sowars he had started

from Tung-chow about 5 a.m. that morning, leaving behind in that city Lieutenant Anderson and his seventeen sowars, Mr. de Norman, one of our attachés, and Mr. Bowlby, the *Times* correspondent. When *en route* they perceived that large bodies of Chinese troops were collecting about the very ground that had been selected for our camp near Chang-kia-wan, and that many great batteries of guns had been placed in position where the day before there had been neither troops nor guns. Mr. Parkes, the most energetic and determined of brave men, resolved at once to go back to Tung-chow to ask its officials what all this meant. This was, I think, an unfortunate, an unwise move on his part, for everything looked as if treachery was intended. He took with him only one man of the party, Private Phipps of the King's Dragoon Guards, a man as brave and as noble-spirited as himself.[1] Before starting for Tung-chow he arranged with Colonel Walker that he and the rest of the party should remain where they were to await his return, except Mr. Loch, who was to ride on to our army to tell the Commander-in-Chief how matters stood.

Loch had been an officer in the East India Company's Service before he had taken to diplomacy, and was as brave by nature as God makes men. Upon reaching our army, and having described the general position to Sir Hope, he volunteered to return at once to Chang-kia-wan to collect our people who were still there and bring them back. Sir Hope agreed, and said: "I will send Wolseley with you." Captain Brabazon, who was standing close by, said: "Colonel Wolseley has not yet come up, sir; may I go instead?" He went, never to return. Had

[1] See page 80.

I been there at the moment, I should have been captured and beheaded as he was near the Pa-li-cheaou Bridge[1] very shortly afterwards, whilst being taken as a prisoner into Pekin. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence!

It was a chivalrous feeling—worthy of the man—that prompted Mr. Loch to return to Tung-chow in order to hasten the departure of those he had so lately parted from there.[2]

Between 10 and 11 a.m.—I had then rejoined Sir Hope Grant—Colonel Walker came galloping towards us with his handful of dragoons and sowars behind him. From him we heard what follows: Whilst awaiting in the enemy's lines the return of Mr. Parkes from Tung-chow—as agreed upon between them when they parted—he had kept moving about to learn something of the enemy's position. The Chinese troops began to be uncivil, and after a time tried to get possession of his sword. Hearing a French officer call to him for help, he at once went towards him. Finding he had been severely cut about, he took the Frenchman's hand, hoping thus to help him away. But a rush was made upon them by some Chinese soldiers, who first possessed themselves of Walker's sword, and then tried to pull him from his horse. In the scuffle the poor French officer was knocked down and murdered. In another minute all must have met with the same fate had they stayed there, so calling his party to ride for their lives,

[1] It was only some years afterwards that I learnt of Sir Hope Grant's intention to have sent me into Tung-chow, and of Brabazon having gone instead.

[2] The story of these events and of the tortures Sir Harry Parkes, Mr. Loch and the other prisoners were subjected to in Pekin is told in the admirable *Life of Sir H. Parkes*, by Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole, vol. i. p. 380.

Colonel Walker and those with him cut their way through the crowd. They succeeded in this, having two only of the party wounded and one horse shot, although every one near seemed to fire at them—even the Chinese batteries did so as they passed them.

The firing thus begun soon became general, and Sir Hope Grant deployed the force he had immediately with him for a general advance. Our artillery playing upon the enemy's masses inflicted heavy losses upon them, and Major Probyn, charging with the reckless daring that has always distinguished him, cleared the front to our immediate left. The action which followed was a brilliant success gained by a small body of English and French troops over an enemy that had at least 20,000 men and a vast number of guns in the field. Our pursuit extended for about two miles beyond Chang-kia-wan.

Sang-ko-lin-sin's attempt to destroy our army by treachery thus signally failed, but we had sustained a grievous—though fortunately only a temporary—loss by his capture of Mr. Parkes, the moving, the indomitable spirit in all our diplomatic dealings with this shamelessly perfidious enemy.

So certain had been our diplomatists that the war was over and peace would be immediately concluded, that before we advanced that morning we were asked to have three horses ready to convey a naval officer then in camp to Tien-tsin upon hearing from Mr. Parkes at Tung-chow that everything had been satisfactorily and finally settled. He was to sail at once for Shanghai to bring up Mr. Bruce in his ship. Although he received the letter which was to have been his sailing orders, he naturally did not start, seeing that instead of making peace the Chinese army

was about to attack us. That night a heavy gloom hung over us at Headquarters, and we all thought more of the gallant men then at the mercy of our brutal enemy than we did of our victory. We did not expect ever to see any of them again. As a punishment for Sang-ko-lin-sin's treachery the walled city of Chang-kia-wan was given over to loot. I have been at the looting of many places but have never taken part in the operation myself, for reasons already stated.

The country over which we manœuvred that day was highly cultivated, chiefly with maize, beans, and sweet potatoes, and it was thickly dotted with well-built villages surrounded by neatly kept orchards and gardens. Handsome groves of dark pine and large curiously shaped tombs were to be seen in all directions. There were numerous monuments, several of which consisted of a tall slab of marble springing from a huge marble tortoise, the Chinese emblem of longevity. The name and virtues of the individual in whose honour each had been erected were recorded thereon.

Upon September 19, the day following these unfortunate events, Mr., afterwards Sir Thomas Wade, went to Tung-chow under a flag of truce to demand the immediate release of the English and French who had been thus treacherously captured. It was a big city, and its governor declared he knew nothing about them; he was in serious dread lest we should assault the city. To have done this would have been unwise, as we were pressed for time, if our army was to be re-embarked before the country was frozen-up for the winter. We arranged, therefore, to spare it, and to make it a depôt for stores and supplies. By a cavalry reconnaissance of the district

in front of us made on September 20, we found the enemy were in considerable force in the neighbourhood of the Pa-li-cheaou, or the eight li bridge.[1] The following morning—September 21—we moved at daybreak to attack them. The French were to make for that bridge, which is a handsome marble structure, whilst we marched for a wooden bridge a mile nearer Pekin. Both bridges spanned what was once the fine Yung-Leang Canal connecting the Pei-Ho with the capital. Our cavalry were to make a wide sweep to the westward, and by attacking the enemy's right drive him in upon our infantry.

A mile's march brought us in presence of a large Chinese army, their cavalry stretching away to their right as far as one could see. Their foot was strongly posted in the inclosures and clumps of trees with which the country there abounded. Our cavalry were soon at work. The enemy's horse, which had already suffered somewhat heavily from our guns and had retreated out of range, now moved as if to envelop our left, but our horsemen made for them with a speed they had not reckoned upon. They were mounted on small ponies, our men on great troop horses. The men of the King's Dragoon Guards were then about the biggest in our cavalry of the Line, and as they went thundering forward with loud shouts their opponents may well have thought their last hour had come. These Dragoons and Fane's Horse were in front with Probyn's regiment in second line. What an inspiriting sight it was! My heart beat quicker as I watched it. Had the Chairman of the Peace Society been there I am sure he would have shouted in exultation as he saw those

[1] That meant eight lee or two and three-quarter miles from Tung-chow by the great paved road that runs between it and Pekin.

lines of gallant horsemen charge at full speed amongst the enemy's hordes. The Tartar cavalry had, however, cunningly halted behind a wide ditch to receive the charge, and delivered a volley when our horsemen reached it. At that period our irregular cavalry always rode with short, standing martingales, which prevented their horses from jumping freely. Many accordingly went head over heels into that ditch, their riders being unable to pull them up in time. Not so, however, the King's Dragoon Guards, whose horses having free heads, jumped or scrambled over safely. They were soon well in amongst the Tartars, riding over men and ponies, and knocking both down together like so many ninepins. But Probyn and Fane's sharp-sworded Sikhs, Pathans and Punjaubee Mussulmans soon followed and showed splendidly, fighting side by side with the big sturdy British Dragoon Guardsmen. In a few minutes riderless Tartar ponies were to be seen galloping in all directions, and the track of our charge was strewn with the enemy. Upon no subsequent occasion did they ever allow our cavalry to get anywhere near them. We had taught them a lesson, and I have no doubt that hundreds of them carried back into their homes in Manchuria and Mongolia marvellous tales of the big Britishers and the reckless swordsmen from the land of the five rivers, who, mounted on great horses, had charged through their ranks that day.

Our guns opened upon their retreating masses, the Armstrong shells making havoc in their ranks. We took a large number of guns during the day, and also burnt a great many Tartar camps that were well laid out, the tents in them being excellent. The country people from far and near helped at this work, and crowds were soon to be

seen staggering to their homes as fast as they could under the weight of the loot they had collected. Our pursuit lasted to within six miles of Pekin, and when we halted both horses and men were very hungry and tired after their day's work. I had great pity for our horses, but none for myself nor for my comrades, for the day's fighting had been well worth any year of humdrum existence. If there was any poor-spirited creature amongst us, that day must have made him a better soldier, and therefore a better man.

We encamped for the night, September 21, close by where the Pekin road crosses the canal by the Pa-li-cheaou Bridge. Our thirsty men and horses drank deeply of that canal water. Hundreds of very large white ducks were swimming tamely on its surface when we arrived. Very few were there next morning, but the ground near all our tents was suspiciously white with feathers.

Within the space of three days we had won two important actions, and the Chinese ministers in Pekin must now have fully believed their inability to oppose us in the field. To have marched direct upon the capital on September 22 would have been a daring move, as one of our divisions had been left behind at Tien-tsin. But had they refused to open its gates, as our siege guns had not yet arrived we could not have breached its walls, and they were too high to be escaladed. It is not wise in dealing with the Chinese to threaten until you are in a position to enforce your threat should it be disregarded. Under the circumstances we then found ourselves in, it was wiser to wait for our siege train at Pa-li-cheaou than to do so immediately under the walls of Pekin. The non-combatant looker-on is apt to forget the lessons which military history

teaches the professional soldier on all such points. The mistake we soldiers had already made was in accepting the pleasant assurances of our diplomatist colleagues that peace was certain, and that we should have no further fighting. Had it not been for this over-confidence in peace on the part of our ambassador we should have reached the Pa-li-cheaou Bridge with all our army and our siege train also, ready for an immediate advance and for the capture of Pekin.

CHAPTER XXXI

Surrender of Pekin

THE result of our battle at the Pa-li-cheaou on September 21 had to some extent opened the eyes of the mandarins to the folly of all further resistance. Whilst encamped on this Yung-Leang canal, near the bridge, many letters passed between Prince Kung and the allied ambassadors. The prince, who was the emperor's brother, wrote to announce that he had been appointed Imperial commissioner, with full powers to treat with us *vice* the Prince of E., who had failed to arrange a peace. He made proposals for a conference, which Lord Elgin rejected, saying he would consider no terms until the prisoners they had captured against the laws of all civilized nations and under the most treacherous circumstances had been sent back to us. It was also stated that until then, we should continue military operations.

I cannot refer to this correspondence without according my admiration of Mr. Parkes' behaviour throughout it. Whilst a cruelly treated prisoner he bore himself like an English gentleman. I can say nothing higher in his favour. He positively refused to try to influence Lord Elgin in any way whatever, even when tortured and threatened with death. He never endeavoured to escape the gross indignities and misery he suffered by any effort to induce our ambassador to make the smallest diminution in our

demands for redress, or to alter in any fashion the terms upon which we were willing to make peace. No more loyal spirit ever sustained a stout heart under more appalling and trying circumstances. His was indeed a rare instance of absolute devotion to public duty.

For Sir Hope Grant to have marched upon Pekin immediately after his victory at Pa-li-cheaou, before our heavy guns and the second division had arrived, would have been a foolish and dangerous proceeding. Assured by those who were alone responsible for the diplomacy of the war that peace was practically assured, he had pushed on to Pekin with a portion only of his army. He now discovered that our ambassador had been tricked and overreached by the wiles and assurances of an unscrupulous enemy. Our vexatious halt at Pa-li-cheaou was the result. To us soldiers it was very trying and painful indeed to feel that we should now probably have to fight another battle whilst a number of our comrades were in the hands of a faithless, cruel enemy. It might lead to their immediate murder. All ranks were well aware that this unpleasant prospect was the outcome of an over-sanguine diplomacy. But Sir Hope Grant was not a man to be led for a second time into so undignified a position. He knew the winter was near at hand, and that peace was consequently an urgent need, but it must be a reality, and not a mere written document.

On September 23 another letter from Prince Kung pressing for peace was received by Lord Elgin. The answer sent to it was, that if within three days from date of writing all the prisoners were returned, and the demands already made were accepted, our army would advance no further, but that unless these terms were accepted we should take

Pekin, an event that would probably lead to the downfall of the Manchoo Dynasty. It was further intimated that those terms were final.

In another letter from the prince, Mr. Parkes had been allowed to enclose a note written in Chinese, asking for clothes for himself and Mr. Loch, and saying that both had been well treated. On the margin, traced in Persian characters, was an intimation that his letter had been written "By Order." When the clothes asked for reached the prisoners, they discovered, written by us in the same characters, the information that our guns would open upon the city in three days.

In some respects the game was in our hands, but time pressed seriously, as we could only count upon another month for military operations. We also felt the necessity of avoiding all extreme measures that might cause the overthrow of the Imperial dynasty, or even very seriously weaken the authority of the existing Government. The great, the essential aim of our policy was to make all China realize that we were immeasurably the stronger, the more powerful nation. They might style us barbarians if it pleased their vanity to do so, but we felt that for all classes to recognize fully our superior military strength would be the surest guarantee of peace in the future.

Prince Kung's answer to Lord Elgin's ultimatum was a proof that he and his councillors were in a dazed condition of mind. Unless they accepted our terms they knew that Pekin must fall, and with it perhaps the whole fabric of Tartar rule also. But they feared to face the sole alternative that could avert this national collapse. The only order they had apparently received from their far-away Emperor was, "Keep the barbarians at a distance."

Their most astute Ministers even had failed in their diplomacy; we were no longer to be taken in by specious promises, and their last hope of being able to prolong negotiations until the fierce winter had set in was fading away. But even Prince Kung, although he was the Emperor's brother, shrank from asking for terms. He, as well as humbler men around him, seemed paralyzed and unable to come to any decision.

No answer to our ultimatum having reached us within the limit Lord Elgin had laid down, and our siege guns having arrived, we broke up our camp at Pa-li-cheaou on October 3, and crossing the canal by a bridge of boats prepared for the purpose, took up a position astride the paved road to Pekin. This road had evidently been in former times a splendid highway. It was made of great blocks of stone some three or four feet long, and about fifteen inches wide, laid closely together. But evidently no care had been taken of it for very many years, and the heavy rains and hard frosts of winter had so disturbed these blocks that to take carts and guns over it would have destroyed their wheels. Like everything remarkable in the once well-named "Flowery Land," this road, as it then was, bespoke a past of royal greatness, of magnificent public works, and a present of degrading decay both in art and in the wisdom and zeal of all in authority.

There we were joined by our Second Division, which had made double marches to reach us. We were delayed a day waiting for a large French convoy, which did not arrive until the 4th, so our movement upon Pekin was postponed until October 5. During our recent halt, letters had arrived daily from Prince Kung, sometimes two in

a day, entreating us not to advance. They all indicated both cunning and fright. He knew he could not stop us, but was afraid to make peace upon our terms.

Upon October 5 the allied armies advanced and bivouacked for the night in a good position north-east of Pekin. The nights were already cold, but the abundance of cut millet enabled us to keep warm. The country became much closer as we approached the capital; there were gardens all round, and numerous groves of pine—usually surrounding important tombs—blocked the view in its immediate vicinity. The roads, unmetalled everywhere, were mostly so hollowed by long use that a mounted man could see nothing of the surrounding country from them. From some high brick-kilns we made out the enormous line of old earthen ramparts which enclosed a great rectangular space to the north of Pekin nearly as large as half the Tartar city. The country people assured us that within that space Sang-ko-lin-sin and his army were encamped, and they said the Emperor was still in the Yuen-ming-Yuen Palace, about five miles west of our bivouac.

October 6 saw us again on the march, and in the evening we bivouacked inside the ramparts from which Sang-ko-lin-sin and his army had just retreated. But in the close country we had just passed through, not only the French but our own cavalry also had "lost touch" with us. The latter had been ordered to make a wide sweep to our right and take up a position on the main road running from Pekin northwards to Jeho, by which we expected the enemy to retreat. During the day Sir Hope Grant had sent to tell General Montauban that he understood Sang-ko-lin-sin had fallen back upon Yuen-ming-Yuen, and that consequently he would push forward for that place.

It was thought advisable, however, to wait until our cavalry had rejoined us before we did so.

I was ordered to take out a squadron of cavalry at daybreak the next morning—October 7—and get into communication with our cavalry brigade and with the French. Before I started we fired a royal salute from the top of the great rampart near us, to indicate to the missing French where our army was.

By making very wide hunting "casts" I found the track of our cavalry brigade and the French army. Following it up some miles, I came upon one of our native cavalry pickets, and learnt from the officer in command of it that the French had taken possession of Yuen-ming-Yuen Palace. A quick gallop soon took me back to our headquarters.

I conducted Sir Hope Grant and Lord Elgin to the palace in the course of the day. What a sight it presented! General Montauban met Sir Hope at the door and begged him not to allow his staff to enter, and he at once assenting told us to stay outside. I was amused at this, because at that very moment there was a string of French soldiers going in empty-handed and another coming out laden with loot of all sorts and kinds. Many were dressed in the richly embroidered gowns of women, and almost all wore fine Chinese hats instead of the French képi. Sir Hope and Lord Elgin went in. Whilst I remained outside, the French "assembly" was beaten on their drums in one of the regimental camps pitched at the gate. But it was sounded in vain; very few men, not ten per company, turned out; the others were doubtless looting inside the palace. For a considerable time I walked up and down with the French general, Baron Janin. He was

an interesting man, and I was much amused to see how large a number of the looters presented him with a gift of something curious as they saluted him in passing out of the palace gates. Many of the looters had well-filled sacks on their backs. One of these, an Artilleryman, having made his offering to the general, turned towards me and said, as he handed to me what at first sight seemed to be a tiny framed picture, "*Mon camarade, voici un petit cadeau pour vous.*" I thanked him and put it into my pocket. It was an extremely good French enamel of a man in a flowing wig, evidently one of the many fine presents sent by Louis XIV to the Emperor of China with the imposing embassy he despatched to the Chinese court. For years it remained in its little Chinese frame standing on my writing-table. About ten years afterwards, when I had married, my wife looking at it said she believed it was by Petitot, and sent it to Paris to have it examined. She was right. It was a miniature of Boileau done by that artist in his best style. It is the only piece of loot I possess, but it is a valuable one.

I make no attempt to describe either the rich treasures of that palace or the highly decorated and, in many respects, very fine buildings which contained them. For some days afterwards the looting was continued, and a large number of our officers secured a good deal, but neither the non-commissioned officers nor the privates—being in camp several miles away—had the chance of obtaining anything. This Sir Hope Grant thought unfair, so he issued a general order directing all our officers who had obtained any loot to send it in forthwith to prize agents, whom he named, in order that it might be sold by public auction, and the sum thus obtained distributed forth-

with amongst the army present before Pekin. This was done, and the sale produced so large a sum that each private soldier received nearly £4 sterling as his share. The Commander-in-Chief and our two generals of division, Sir John Michel and Sir Robert Napier, renounced all claims for any share. This was most generous of them, especially on Sir Hope Grant's part, as his share would have been considerable.

We secured a large number of most interesting official papers in the palace, many of which threw much light upon the events of the campaign. One was Sang-ko-lin-sin's memorial addressed to the Emperor two days after we had taken the Taku forts. In it he advised His Majesty to go on a hunting tour in a fashion that evidently bred suspicion of his motives in the minds of the civil Ministers at court. They all condemned the proposal. He had made a serious mistake in not strengthening Peh-Tang and in leaving open the back-door of the Taku defences. His paper upon the general defence of the coast-line and upon the chances of our attacking him was clever. His opinion that our overthrow was certain was formed in ignorance of the immense advantage that steam gunboats and the superiority of rifled guns and muskets and of a good military system gave us over the ill-armed hordes he commanded. Amongst other papers found in the Imperial Palace was Lord Elgin's treaty of 1858. I wish I had kept it, for framed upon my walls it would have always been a warning against implicit trust in paper treaties with barbarous States until their rulers had been made to fully realize that our Sovereign could and would, if necessary, compel adherence to their stipulations by force of arms.

A letter of October 6 from Prince Kung, signed by Mr. Parkes, reached our headquarters the day after, in which His Highness promised the return of the prisoners on October 8. In the afternoon, Mr. Wade met the commissioner Hang-Ki immediately outside the walls of Pekin, the latter having been let down over the wall in a basket. He accounted for this by saying the gates were blocked up. Kung, he said, had left the city with the army the day before, taking most of the prisoners with him, and swearing that those still in Pekin would be surrendered the next day. In accordance with this promise, Messrs. Loch, Parkes, a French gentleman, some French soldiers and some sowars, reached our Headquarters. On the 12th and 14th of that month one more French soldier and ten more of our sowars were surrendered, in all nineteen souls of the thirty-nine they had treacherously captured against the laws of all civilized nations. The gloomiest page of history does not disclose anything more horrible than the story told by one and all of those who returned. The refinement of the torture and the senseless cruelty inflicted upon them made one doubt whether the Chinese were human.

I pass by the heartrending stories told to us by the unfortunate sowars who survived the tortures inflicted upon them. They spoke in glowing terms of how Private Phipps of the King's Dragoon Guards had behaved until a lingering death ended his misery. He spoke a little Hindostanee, and could therefore make himself understood by them. They said he never lost heart, and always strove to cheer up those who bemoaned their cruel fate. To his last conscious moments he encouraged them with words of hope and comfort. All honour be to the memory

of this brave, stout heart, for it is only the highest order of courage, mental and bodily, that can sustain men through the tortures inflicted upon this noble British private soldier.

A paper in Chinese, stating the terms upon which alone we would spare Pekin, was sent to the authorities in the city. A *sine quâ non* was the surrender of the north-eastern, or in Chinese nomenclature, the An-ting Gate, for unless it was in our hands Lord Elgin's safety could not be guaranteed when he entered Pekin to formally sign the proposed treaty. We gave the mandarin who was commanding in the city until noon of October 13 to comply with this demand. It was calculated that we could not have the breaching battery we were then constructing, ready to open fire before that hour.

This battery for our four heavy guns was being prepared behind the high enclosure round the "Temple of the Earth," and was about 200 yards from the city wall, and some 600 yards east of the An-ting Gate.

We warned the Pekin citizens by proclamation of what we meant to do if our demands were not complied with. I went to the battery some time before the sun had reached the meridian on the day we had named for the surrender, and leaving my horse under cover I entered the battery and found everything ready for opening fire. I took my place by the right-hand gun, where the captain of artillery in command stood, like myself, watch in hand, awaiting what was to be a noon of dire import not only to the inhabitants, but also to the fortunes of the Chinese reigning family.

Up to within ten minutes of the time named, no sign of surrender was made by the enemy. Our embrasures

were then unmasked, the guns were deliberately sponged, loaded, run out, and then laid upon the wall where we meant to batter it. I held my breath ; I was not happy, feeling we were playing at a "game of brag," for I knew too well that with the number of rounds we had with us no effective breach could be hoped for. But the enemy did not know that, when from the city walls they saw the muzzles of those dreaded guns run forward through the embrasures into which the citizens could look from their elevated position.

But a few moments before noon was reached, the An-ting Gate swung open, and Pekin "surrendered at discretion." I drew a long breath of intense satisfaction at the result. We at once took possession of this entrance to the city, which was now at our mercy, and in a few minutes the Union Jack floated from the far-famed walls of the "Celestial Capital," the pride of so many millions of Chinamen who had never even seen them, and which until then had been regarded as impregnable by the whole nation. We held this An-ting Gate until peace had been signed and the allied armies had started upon their return march for Tien-tsin.

A few days afterwards, when reconnoitring to the west of the city, I met a Tartar escort with five carts, each carrying a rough coffin that contained the remains of a British prisoner who had been tortured to death by our inhuman enemy. Fastened to each coffin was a piece of paper with a Chinese representation of the name of the victim it contained. We buried the remains of our poor murdered countrymen with all military honours in the Russian cemetery outside the city.

The day after this sad ceremony, Lord Elgin made a

fresh offer of peace to Prince Kung, adding to our former demands the payment within a week of £100,000 for distribution amongst the families of those whom he had allowed to be murdered.[1] We informed him at the same time that to mark our horror of this foul crime we intended utterly to destroy everything that remained of Yuen-ming-Yuen Palace, within whose precincts several of the British captives had been subjected to the grossest indignities. We also intimated our intention of retaining a garrison in Tien-tsin for the coming winter, and wound up by saying that it was only by the acceptance of these terms the doom hanging over the Manchoo Dynasty could be averted.

The fact that the Taiping army was said to be already within a hundred miles of Pekin, may have been an extra reason why the Emperor should close with our terms lest we should make common cause with the rebels. The day following the despatch of these terms to Prince Kung, we burnt down the beautiful palace of Yuen-ming-Yuen, in which Lord Macartney, as the ambassador of England, and afterwards a French ambassador from Louis XIV had been received in great state by former emperors. A gentle wind carried to Pekin dense clouds of smoke from this great conflagration, and covered its streets with a shower of burnt embers, which must have been to all classes silent evidences of our work of retribution. I am sure it was taken as an intimation of what might befall the city and all its palaces unless our terms of peace were at once accepted. To have asked for a great sum as an indemnity would have only been to impose that amount

[1] This amount was made over to our Commissary General on October 22.

of taxation upon the people, but the burning of this palace was a well-placed blow to Tartar pride and to the Emperor's absurd notions of his supremacy over all nations. Our reasons for doing this were duly announced in a proclamation written in Chinese, and posted in all the places to which we had access.

In carrying out my reconnoitring duties I was brought into daily contact with the village people at long distances from our camp near Pekin. When returning from these expeditions I passed several times through the large village close to the burnt palace of Yuen-ming-Yuen. Upon one occasion my ear caught the sound of heavy blows being struck and of groans as from a man in pain. I turned my horse into the yard whence the sound came, and there I found one man beating another on the head with an iron hammer. I saved the victim from immediate death but do not know if his assailant returned to complete the murder afterwards. From what I saw of the place I believe the villagers far and near obtained more loot from that palace than did the two allied armies.

In one of my many reconnoitring expeditions near Pekin I became separated from my party, which was a troop of Probyn's Horse. I had two of them riding behind me as orderlies, when I suddenly came across a hollow road so unusually deep that even mounted men upon it did not show over its unfenced sides. As I came to the top of the bank overlooking the road beneath, to my astonishment I saw an extremely tidy-looking and well-turned-out troop of Tartar cavalry moving along it at a walk towards Pekin. They were immediately below me, and as I thus came upon them they were evidently as much astonished as I was. Instinctively I drew my

revolver from its case, and my two Sikh orderlies cocked their carbines, and in another second would have let drive into these smart-looking Mongol horsemen. I said," Don't fire," and lowered my own pistol. I could easily have accounted for at least three of them, and my two orderlies for another brace, but I had not the heart to fire in cold blood upon men armed only with bows and arrows and trumpery swords who had not attacked me. They rode on at a quickened pace, evidently glad to get beyond the range of the barbarian's bullet.

It was arranged that the treaty of peace was to be signed in the Hall of Audience within Pekin in the afternoon of October 24. I was told to make the closest inspection of the place beforehand, for there were many sinister rumours afloat that the Chinese meant to blow up our ambassador. I did so, but could find nothing suspicious, and felt that it would be difficult to blow up Lord Elgin without killing Prince Kung also. However, one of our Divisions was carefully distributed along the route to be taken through the city, and a strong guard surrounded our ambassador.

The presence of a large force of troops marching through the streets of Pekin with bands playing and colours flying must have impressed all Chinamen with the folly of their rulers in making war upon us. I feel sure it had more effect with the people than any number of paper treaties could have had. It was an open and undeniable assertion on our part, and of recognition on the part of the Emperor, of our superior strength and of our recent victories. It made every member of the Chinese official hierarchy realize that distance could not save the culprit from our vengeance.

In case of any treachery being attempted during the

signing of the treaty in Pekin, it was arranged that three guns should be fired at the An-ting Gate, where a strong reserve of troops was posted. Upon hearing that signal, our first Division was at once to march into the city.

Prince Kung was a nice-looking, yellow-faced Tartar, of middle height and good features. He was, I should say, of about eight or nine and twenty. He looked a gentleman amidst the crowd of bilious, bloated, small-pox-marked faces of the mandarins around him. It would indeed have been difficult to find anywhere a less pleasing lot of mortals than they were.

It was hoped that Mr. Bruce, who was to take up his residence at Pekin as our representative when his brother, Lord Elgin, left China, would arrive before Prince Kung left Pekin. The army was to be detained there until November 8, after which date we could no longer depend upon reaching the Taku forts before the Pei-Ho had been closed to navigation.

Winter had set in severely before the army left Pekin and its neighbourhood on November 7 and 8. We had already had several days of heavy rain and hard frost, from which our Indian followers began to suffer. The cold north winds of winter try the Eastern constitution in that region, so all were glad to say " good-bye " to Pekin and its neighbourhood. I never served with a healthier, better-cared-for or more skilfully led army in the field. The men looked well and strong as they marched south.

Our embassy was established for the winter at Tien-tsin, where we left a garrison of two and a half British battalions—the other half of the third battalion being quartered in the Taku forts—Fane's regiment of cavalry, a battery of field artillery, and a battalion of military

train. Brigadier-General Staveley was left in command. Those troops were provided with an ample supply of warm clothing and of everything they could possibly require.

Before I left Tien-tsin all its shops were open as usual, and driving a lively trade. The confectioners soon earned a well-deserved celebrity for the excellence of their cakes, and the shopkeepers generally were extremely civil.

General Sir Hope Grant and the Headquarter Staff left that city the end of November, and having embarked at the mouth of the Pei-Ho, we steamed away for Shanghai. So ended the China War of 1860. I sincerely hope that every war we shall have forced upon us may be as ably planned and as well carried out as this was by my old and well-loved chief, Sir Hope Grant. He was the best of men and the bravest of soldiers: I can think of no higher praise that man can earn.

CHAPTER XXXII

A Visit to Japan, 1860–1

WHEN the war came to an end, twelve of the officers belonging to the Headquarter Staff, including our Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hope Grant, hired a P. and O. steamer in which we made a trip to Japan, then a very little known country. I read Lawrence Oliphant's book upon that strange land during our voyage, and thought how much he had used his privilege as a traveller to draw the long bow. His descriptions of the Japanese women and the manners and morals of the people condemned him in the eyes of all who read the book as a daring story-teller. But as we steamed away from that land of flowers and charming women and extremely able men, having seen a good deal of the country and its people, we one and all confessed how much we had wronged him. Far from exaggerating what he had seen, he had evidently curbed his powers of description from a feeling that if he had told the whole truth about Japan as he saw it, his readers would not have believed him.

I shall not dwell upon the delightful time we spent at Yedda and the Treaty Ports, nor upon the glorious outlines and colouring of the varied landscapes and coast views along the shores of the great inland sea by which we returned from Yokohama. Ours was, I believe, the first steamer

ever allowed to explore the beauties of that sea, many of whose narrow channels reminded me of the Bosphorus, that exquisite bit of our old-world scenery.

I have often thought over all we saw and learned when in Japan as regarded her people and their essentially aristocratic form of government at that period. But when I review my impressions, and strive to compare Japan's then position in the world with her present power and eminence amongst the nations of the earth, I realize what being strong on land and sea means to a nation.

In the winter of 1860-61, when I visited Japan, it was not recognized as a power to be counted with in the list of nations by any Foreign Office. She was still a curiosity, a land to be visited by those in search of new interests, or of material and subjects for a book of travels. She then possessed nothing one could dignify with the name of an army, and she owned no ship for either peace or war that could sail safely beyond sight of land. Indeed, there was then a law according to which the sterns of all Japanese ships should be made of a pattern that rendered it impossible for them to undertake long voyages far from their own shores. Now we find Japan a considerable naval power and to be reckoned with as such by all other fleet-owning nations. But the most wonderful change is to be found in the form of government. Then there were two rulers, the Tycoon and the Mikado. The former was the temporal, the latter the spiritual ruler, but I never found out the exact division of power and responsibility between them. The Tycoon, then a boy, was to be seen by his people, and he admitted even foreigners to his presence; but, except by his thirteen wives, the Mikado was seen by none. He lived in seclusion on the shore of the inland sea.

I do not think the world's history affords a more remarkable instance of a sweeping revolution than that by which Japan entirely changed her form of government in a very short space of time. The Tycoon was dethroned and the Mikado set up in his place. This mysterious monarch, who had been previously regarded as a sort of divine personage, never allowed to walk, but carried from one room to another when necessary, and never seen, even by his Ministers, suddenly blossomed out into the very able ruler of a great empire. He discarded the graceful and becoming costume of his forefathers, and ere long I saw him described in a newspaper as dressed in the hideous clothes we daily wear at dinner, and with his empress on his arm, taking the leading part in opening a new railway!

Should China ever be wise enough to follow Japan's example in reforming her army and navy system, she is bound to become the most powerful of nations. If she wishes for any proof of what she might become under a Napoleon, let China study how Japan has converted herself into a powerful empire within the life of one generation.

Some years after the time to which I here refer, it was a question whether Colonel Charley Gordon or I should be sent to help China in dealing with the Taiping Rebellion. He was most wisely selected. As I have already mentioned, there had grown up between us many bonds of union, for I admired him with a reverence I had never felt for any other man. When he returned from China as the great Christian hero of the Taiping War, I said to him laughingly, "How differently events might have turned out had I been sent on that mission instead of you. I should have gone there with the determination of wiping out the rebellion and of becoming myself the Emperor of China!" How

much loftier and nobler were the objects he sought after than the part I aspired to play there? He had no earthly aspirations, for his Master was not of this world, and ambition, as that vice or virtue is commonly understood, had no resting-place in his philosophy.

As I write these lines, I reflect on the small beginnings from which some of the great armies and navies of the world have sprung. Whilst in Japan during the winter of 1860–61, I found in one of her ports the first ocean-going naval squadron Germany ever sent abroad. It consisted of a few small ships, the biggest being an old and obsolete British frigate or cruiser named the *Thetis*, which I understood we had made a present to the Prussian Kingdom of those days. That squadron was commanded by an officer whom we had trained in our navy, as had also been many others who were with him. Such was the beginning of the present great German navy that has now become one of the first in Europe. Her people are learning what an extremely costly matter it is to be strong both by sea and land. If she ever becomes a first-class naval power her people will perhaps realize how impossible it is for even the richest nations to be pre-eminent upon both land and sea.

I much enjoyed my short stay in Japan, where everything was so very different from what is to be seen there now. I found the men extremely clever and the women most fascinating. At Yokohama there was a sort of Cremorne Gardens which were extensively visited by all strangers. It was a Government institution, and printed in large English letters over the wooden arch you passed under upon entering the grounds was: "For the amusement of foreigners; no dogs or Chinamen admitted." The Japanese rulers then had an intense hatred of the Chinese

nation. There was a good theatre in those gardens, where pretty and extremely graceful girls danced and sang. Morality, as we understand the expression, was not then apparently esteemed an admirable virtue by any class of the Japanese people.

We all rode the nine or ten miles that separate Yokohama from Yeddo, or Tokio as it is now called. Our ponies were shod with a sort of straw pad that was fastened by strings round the fetlock. When one pad was lost or worn out you stopped at the nearest shop and bought another for the decimal part of a farthing. In bad weather when it began to rain you bought a waterproof coat made of paper for which you paid a few halfpence. When the rain ended you threw it away.

Yeddo was then an enormous city. The frequency of earthquakes rendered it out of the question to have houses more than two very low stories in height, so its population may not have been as great as an English city of half its extent would be. There was, I think, an earthquake each of the days I spent there, and more than once during my stay in Japan we had two, three and even four shocks.

Yeddo was divided into what we might call wards, each ward being separated from those about it by strong gates, at each of which was a police guard. Their arrangements in case of fire were extremely good, and as the upper story of every house was constructed of wood and paper, the fires were numerous. The lower story was built of stone, each stone made use of being mortised into those above and upon each side of it. This was done to hold it together during the worst earthquakes.

The position of Damio, or Prince, was about the same as that of a great peer in the middle ages must have been with

us. When such a man of consequence appeared in the streets, every one went down on his knees, and bobbed his head against the ground. The Damio's retainers wore his crest on the left breast near the shoulder, and as a rule got drunk about sundown. They were styled yaconeens, and their social position would correspond very much with that of the gentleman hanger-on or retainer in our great houses some four or five centuries ago.

One never dared to go out in Yeddo after about 4 p.m., for as a rule those retainers got drunk at that hour, and any drunken yaconeen you chanced to meet might take it into his head to cut you down. In fact, all Japan was then so unlike anything in Europe that I look back at my short stay there with the deepest interest and pleasure. All this is now ancient history, and the visitor to any great Japanese city in these days finds himself amidst a highly civilized and very clever people, and as safe as he would be in Piccadilly after dark.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Taiping Rebellion, 1861

WHILST we had been employed in bringing the Emperor of China to reason at Pekin, the ancient capital of Nankin was under the rule of a usurper who styled himself the Tien-wan, or "Heavenly King." He had begun life at Canton as a groom to Mr. Roberts, an American missionary. From that good man he had picked up some knowledge of the Bible and of Christianity. He was not only an apt scholar, but a fellow of sufficient imagination to invent a religion of his own. He soon obtained a large following amongst men of his own class, and succeeded in collecting round him a fighting army of adventurers. They had nothing but life to lose, and the Chinaman does not regard its possession as highly as we do. We make a fetish of human life, and guard it round with every sort of shield and buckler that human ingenuity can devise. We invest death—the surrender of that life—with every earthly and repugnant horror that imagination can invent, and are frightened by priestly stories of the everlasting torments and misery our souls may possibly, if not probably, have subsequently to endure for ever in an unknown country, from which return is impossible. But not so with the Chinaman; death has few horrors for him. To him it is as natural to die as to be born, and unless death

be accompanied by torture, to have his head cut off cannot be much worse than having a tooth drawn.

The very poor in China live extremely hard lives, and consequently a clever and successful adventurer, like this self-styled "Heavenly King," can easily collect around him a large following bent on a happy, easy life, even though it may possibly be a short one. Having long been anxious to visit this self-created monarch, I started by river from Shanghai for Nankin, and upon landing was provided with quarters and was fed during my stay there by order of its new sovereign. I called upon Mr. Roberts, the former master of this ruler, and found him an interesting old man, with no remarkable characteristics: he spoke English with a broad American accent. Dressed in a handsomely embroidered robe of Imperial yellow silk, and with his mandarin hat on, he looked just like a Chinaman. With that true republican spirit which burns in the breasts of many in United States society, and causes them to despise all titles conferred by monarchs, he seemed anxious I should understand that the rank his costume denoted, corresponded exactly with that of marquis in England. He was very communicative and interesting, and from him I learnt a great deal about the rebellion and its prospects of eventual success.

Soochow, that great emporium of riches and of silk manufacture, had recently been captured and destroyed by the rebels. Its loot had filled the coffers of the "Heavenly King" and his associates, and had also provided the latter with fine new clothes. That ruler, who claimed kinship with our Creator, and to be the "uterine brother" of our Saviour, professed to have frequent visions, during which he received God's orders as to what he should do.

But his system of government was essentially Chinese, and the executioner's sword was never allowed to remain long in its scabbard. He had recently built a considerable palace, where he lived secluded from male society, surrounded by women only.

Whilst I stood opposite to it one day, the Great Gates were thrown open and a woman appeared carrying a highly-ornamented tray on which was a sort of yellow despatch-box, closely sealed, and pictured over with dragons. It contained an edict he had lately determined upon, and this was the manner in which he published it. A great crowd of courtiers had assembled for the occasion, all of whom fell at once upon their knees. Placed in a sedan chair it was carried off with great ceremony to the special "king" who attended to such matters, whilst a salvo of guns and the noise of a band attracted public attention to the event. The one really good thing about this impostor's rule was—the positive prohibition of opium smoking. To distinguish the Taipings from all other Chinamen the tail was abolished and all were compelled to wear their hair long.

During my stay in Nankin I was allowed to go where I liked, and in my excursions round the neighbourhood I usually put up many pheasants in the untilled fields. The newly-erected rebel fortifications resembled the castles I had often built as a child with playing cards and boxes of toy bricks. They were garrisoned by an undrilled, undisciplined rabble, and I soon realized that the only strength in this rebel movement lay in the weakness of the Imperial Government.

The tombs of the Ming dynasty, which had so long ruled China before the Tartar invasion are well worth a visit, though

the rebels had ruined much of their beauty. An imposing avenue from Nankin leads to them, upon each side of which there are stone representations of elephants and camels and tigers in various positions, resembling in many ways the streets of sphinxes by which the Pharaohs approached their ancient and gorgeous temples in Upper Egypt. The human figures there represented have neither turned-up Tartar hats nor the long-plaited tails of recent centuries, showing they were sculptured in an epoch previous to that of the present Manchoo dynasty. The far-famed porcelain tower had been blown up by the rebel barbarians, and was then but a heap of ruins.

A friend, the partner in charge of one of our great merchant-houses at Shanghai, arrived at Nankin during my interesting stay there. He was in a fine steamer bound for Hankow, the head of the Yangtse-Kiang navigation, and having asked me to join him in the trip, I did so with great pleasure. During our voyage we found that wherever the rebels had been, the towns were in ruins and the country a desert. The contrast between the rebel territory and that under the Pekin Government was remarkable. The portion of the river where the Taipings held sway was deserted; elsewhere it was a great highway of trade, numerous junks of all sizes crowding its waters.

I left Nankin early on February 28, 1861, on board a spacious steamer, and was glad to find myself once more amongst clean English people. The voyage to Hankow, and also the cities upon the Yangtse-Kiang have been so often described that I shall not dwell upon the scenery we passed through. I content myself with recording the fact that we anchored off Hankow in twelve fathoms of water on March 6, 1861. I was much surprised at the size and

prosperous appearance of the city, built upon both banks, but was still more astonished to find a large number of life-boats plying about in all directions. They were painted bright red so as to be easily distinguished at a distance. This was a great novelty in a land where all classes are usually so indifferent to any care for human life. When we landed immense crowds pressed to see us ; I understood then why it was that the officials who first came on board begged we should not beat the people who were sure to follow us.

A great wooden archway decorated with flags and coloured cloth had been specially erected in our honour. Every spot of vantage was occupied to which a youth could climb or a man could reach by pushing and squeezing. Little boys and old men were perched upon the house-tops to catch a sight of us the outer barbarians as we struggled with difficulty through the densely-packed people into the sedan chairs waiting for us. In these we proceeded at a brisk pace along the narrow thronged street leading to the city gate. Round it were some outworks of recent construction, the guard of which turned out as we passed, and although they freely used great whips of twisted thongs, they had much difficulty in keeping a way cleared for our imposing procession. We were received by the Viceroy with every possible mark of respect in his great yamen, or official residence. Having gone through the conventional etiquette of bowing, smiling and shaking one's own hands, he took us into a well-decorated "Hall of Reception," and motioned us to seats. There all the great mandarins of the place were assembled, but none were allowed to sit. Our interpreter, a blue-button mandarin, upon entering the hall prostrated himself at the Viceroy's

feet bumping, his forehead several times against the ground in the usual orthodox fashion of "kow-towing."

His Excellency then put to us the usual conventional questions as to our age, etc., and tea of an exquisite flavour was handed to our host and by him presented with great ceremony to us. His conversation was extremely interesting, and he discussed the official relations past and to come between England and China.

Our interview lasted nearly an hour, when he pressed us to stay and dine, but as we had both had at previous Chinese entertainments quite enough of sea-slugs, bird's-nest soup and eggs that had been buried for years, we politely refused.

Upon rising to leave, he said he wished to present us with a specimen of his poetry as a remembrance of our visit. He was as proud of his handwriting as he was also of his verses, both accomplishments being unusual with Chinese generals.

A table with writing materials was placed before him, the paper being strips of red paper spotted with gold leaf, and about seven or eight feet long and some fifteen inches wide. He wrote rapidly with a good-sized brush, a servant holding out the paper for him. This is no uncommon mode of paying visitors a compliment, and such papers may be seen hanging in most great Chinese houses, as those then given to me hang now in my humble abode.

After a few days' stay at Hankow, we left that most interesting of well-governed cities and returned to Shanghai. I started for home by the first mail steamer that left for Suez, but as I was leaving my generous and most interesting host told me as a profound secret that he had just received a cypher telegram from his steamer that had reached Woosung a few hours before, announcing that the first shot

had been fired in America in what subsequently developed into the greatest fratricidal struggle the world has known for many centuries ; I mean the Confederate War. For at least a full day he alone in Shanghai possessed this information, and his dealings in the Chinese markets during that short time based upon it, without doubt, paid the Dent House largely. Such was the manner in which great sums were then frequently made through fast-running steamers by Jardine and Co. at Hong Kong and by the Dent House at Shanghai. By the time I had reached Hong Kong all the world there had heard this startling news. It set my brain speculating as to how it would affect England, and consequently how it might influence my own future career.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Trent Affair—Ordered to Canada, 1861–2

UPON my return home from China, I had a pleasant time in Paris, knowing most of those who were then at our Embassy. It was then just the place for an idler, who, having been some years campaigning with no opportunity of spending money, wishes to get through his small savings without worry or trouble. I have often upon such occasions laughed to myself as I called to mind the old Portsmouth story I heard when quartered there years ago, of a naval captain who, having just been commissioned to a ship, in the old days of sailing vessels, was on the look-out for a good crew. Strolling down the Hard, he saw "bearing-down upon him" a sailor who had been "stroke" in his gig during his last commission. On his arm was a full rigged Portsmouth lady, dressed, evidently at the sailor's expense, in the brightest of new and gorgeous clothing, whilst walking by his side was a huge Newfoundland dog with a big watch hanging by a chain from its mouth. "Halloo, Jones," said the captain, "you are the very man I wanted to meet. I have just commissioned the *Arathusa*, and we sail next week. I still want a few good hands, and you must come as my coxswain." "Very sorry, sir," said Jones, "but 'tisn't possible; I haven't got through half my money yet." "But," replied the captain, "you have still nearly a week to spend it in, and I can't sail

without you." Jack scratched his head, looking perplexed and troubled. He wanted to sail with his old captain, but what was he to do with his savings? At last, his face brightened up suddenly; a brilliant idea had come to him. "Yes, sir," he said at length, "p'raps I can manage it; another Newfoundland dog, another watch, and another Poll; I think I'll do it." It was a bargain. And so it was often with us officers home from a war, and we ought to have known better.

In the autumn I visited several friends, hospitable old Tom Fortescue amongst others, at whose house I then first met my wife.

At the beginning of the winter of 1861–2, I went to hunt with a married sister in Ireland. She had bought a couple of horses in the autumn for me, and the day after my arrival I hunted one with the Duhallow Hounds, and the other next day with some harriers; they were both good fencers. The third day there was no hunting, and I rode out with my sister to buy a third horse I had seen ridden the day before, and to which I had taken a fancy. When passing the village post office, I asked for letters, and was given a bundle, which I put into my pocket. As we jogged along the road I took them out one by one, to see from whom they came. One was an official telegram, and upon opening it, I found it was an order to embark at Liverpool in three or four days, I forget which, for service in Canada as Assistant Quartermaster-General. I did not buy that third horse, but started the same evening for London. The morning papers had startled us with the serious news of what is now generally known as the "Trent Affair," and this sudden order for service in Canada made it evident that war was in the air. What had taken place was broadly as follows.

THE TRENT AFFAIR

The captain of a frigate belonging to the United States of America had boarded one of our Royal Mail steamers, the *Trent*, and had taken from under our flag Messrs. Slidell and Mason, the envoys of the Confederate States, then on their way to Europe. Unless the captured envoys were at once returned and due apologies made, it was very evident that nothing could avert a war. One of the very shrewdest of men and most sagacious of statesmen, Mr. Abraham Lincoln, was then President, and was determined to crush what the people of the Northern States regarded as the rebellion of the Southern States. But he was wise enough to realize that he could not do so if our fleet, by keeping open the Southern ports, enabled the young Confederacy to obtain from Europe everything they required for their war. Without doubt, thousands of recruits from all parts of Europe would have poured in through the ports we should keep open. He therefore most wisely determined to disown the over-zealous act of a by no means far-seeing naval captain, and accordingly, with all due apologies for the insult offered to our flag, he delivered over to us the envoys who had been taken by force from a British merchant ship. Thus ended an episode that must have brought on a terrible war if the United States had been ruled then by an ordinary man.

I went to see my old friend Colonel Kenneth Mackenzie who was going to Canada as Quartermaster-General—my immediate chief—in this emergency. I had known him as the chief staff officer at Balaclava, and I had served under him when he was Quartermaster-General during the recent war in China. He told me we were to embark at Woolwich the following day in the steamship *Melbourne*,

a well-known "lame duck," that he had condemned as useless during the Crimean War, and she was known to be a very bad ship at sea, to be very slow, to have unsatisfactory machinery, and, indeed, to be a worthless craft in every way. He told all this to the authorities, impressing upon them how very important it was that the officers of the Quartermaster-General's Department should sail by the fastest steamer, in order to reach Canada in time to make arrangements for the reception of the troops then under orders for Montreal and other Canadian cities. But all to no purpose. He was told that the Government insisted upon our starting on the day named, because it was deemed most desirable to announce in Parliament as soon as possible that the chief Staff Officers of the force bound for Canada had already embarked to arrange for its landing there, etc. It was evidently hoped the announcement would have some important moral effect in the United States, and make the Washington Government realize we were in earnest. *Quantula sapientia!* But as far as the army was concerned, the unfortunate and obvious result was, that the troops reached Canada before we did, for our old tub of a ship took twenty-nine days in getting to Halifax, Nova Scotia. That wretched craft did everything she ought not to have done short of going to the bottom, and was everything she should not have been.

We started from Woolwich Arsenal on December 7, 1861, and at Plymouth—three days afterwards—picked up H.M.S. *Orpheus*, a fine frigate that was to be our convoy to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. She was to keep us in sight, and guard us from all roving American cruisers during our passage across the Atlantic. The commanding officer on board the *Melbourne* was Colonel Sir J. Gordon, K.C.B., an old friend,

who had been Commanding Royal Engineer of the right attack during our Siege of Sebastopol. He was, as a soldier and in private life, one of the most perfect heroes I have ever known. I do not believe God ever created a grander character. I have already mentioned him in my chapters on the Crimea.

It was bad dirty weather when we steamed out of the Thames into the Channel, bound for Plymouth, and it grew worse between that place and Cork. From that beautiful harbour we finally started about noon on December 14, and pushed out into the great Atlantic. There the sea, in the penny-a-liner's language, was "running mountains high." I do not remember having ever been on a sea that looked more angry and, to the landsman's taste, more hateful. A few of us, "old salts," had our meals as best we could, holding on with one hand as we fed ourselves with the other; but as a rule nearly every one was very sick. We lost sight of our convoy in the afternoon of the 16th, and though we fired guns by day and burnt blue lights by night, we never saw her again during the voyage. When we last caught sight of her she was rolling heavily, and dipping her leeward yards in the sea as she did so. I presume she reached her destination, wherever it was, but as far as we were concerned, she might just as well have gone to that undefined locality commonly styled, "Davy's Locker."

The weather grew worse and worse, and our discomfort increased. The food was execrable, the cooking worse. We saw no other ships; occasionally we lay-to, for our wretched engines could make no headway in such terrible weather. How I pitied the non-commissioned officers and men of the field battery we had on board. Their existence must have been simply terrible, for that of the colonels

on board the ship was bad enough, as she pitched and rolled, often straining as if she were going to pieces. Two Royal Engineer officers occupied a cabin near mine, their respective berths being one over the other. I was wakened one night by terrific screams from their cabin. I jumped from my cot, and rushing to see what was the matter, found that the ship, having made a more than usually heavy roll, the upper berth had given way—everything on board that ship seemed to give way on the least provocation—and coming down with its six feet high occupant upon the stomach of the officer sleeping below, caused him in his pain and confusion to imagine the ship was going down with all North America on top of him. I think my reader will sympathize with the poor devil below, who was, however, fortunately for himself a fat man of considerable girth. As it turned out, he was more frightened than hurt.

Upon reaching the neighbourhood of the Nova Scotian shores, we discovered that the captain had never been there before, and knew nothing about Halifax or of the entrance to its harbour, or of its adjoining rock-bound coast. The weather was still bad, and provisions for the officers mess began to run out, as did also the coal supply for our boilers. Our skipper—who asked the advice of every one who would give it—proposed to run for Sydney, in Cape Breton Island, where there are good coal mines. The only man on board who had ever been to Halifax was the portly captain of sappers, who had been recently nearly squashed under the falling berth. He was one of those dangerous men who never confess they cannot answer every question put to him, no matter what the subject may be. You might, however, in this man's case, have safely bet three to two that he was wrong in every answer he gave. Having

previously served in Canada he professed to know the coast we were then nearing, and gave the skipper much advice regarding it, a circumstance which considerably alarmed those on board who knew our engineer captain best.

In the course of my eventful life I can recall many extremely disagreeable nights and days. Even now the remembrance of them is still fresh in my mind; and amongst them, very high up towards the boiling-point of my past miseries, I place the Christmas Day of 1871 that I spent on board the steamer *Melbourne*. We lay-to most of the daylight, steaming hard to try and keep her inconstant head to the wind, as she plunged and rolled, shipping tons of water as she did so. She was a craft with a poop under which was the cuddy where we fed. Cooking that day was out of the question. The waves frequently broke over the deck, and the wind was terrific. To lie in a dark cabin below, where there was no ventilation, was impossible, so I sat on a barrel in the corner of the cuddy, the three other corners being similarly occupied by shipmates. Many seas broke in through the door which opened upon the deck, and swashed freely and loudly backwards and forwards through the place. We fed that day as best we could, *sur-le-pouce*, upon sardines, or whatever we could get that required no cooking. The position, though amusing as a recollection now, then soon palled upon me. All reading and writing were impossible, for we had as much as we could do to retain our far from secure position on the barrels.

However, at last we found ourselves in the smooth waters of Sydney Harbour. As the whole country was already deep in snow, and as most of the population only spoke Gaelic, there was little to tempt us ashore. A battalion of the

Scots Guards had recently put in there for coals, and the inhabitants in wild delight could apparently think of little else than their splendid pipers, and of a very handsome young Scotch peer, who had won all hearts because he spoke Gaelic, and had fascinated them—especially the women—by his kilt and his graceful bearing in the sword dance.

The first news we heard from shore was that the Prince Consort was dead. How all hearts on board went out to the poor widowed Queen, so dear to all her soldiers. There was silence on board for some time when this intelligence became known.

Having taken in enough coal to enable us to reach Halifax, to which place we were now bound in obedience to fresh orders just received, we again put to sea, where we again had a bad time of it. Late one evening we almost put our bowsprit into the entrance to that harbour, having nearly come abreast of the lighthouse; but as the night was so dark, and as no pilot came off to help us, our skipper thought it more prudent to turn back into the open sea, and there await daybreak. However, we were at anchor safely in the harbour before noon the following day, January 5, 1862. There we found a great ship with a battalion of the Grenadier Guards on board. She had tried to get up the St. Lawrence, and although she had one of the most experienced of captains on board, the attempt had to be abandoned, and he turned round and made for Halifax.

It was a matter of some importance that we, the Staff Officers, should get to Montreal as quickly as possible, so after many consultations with General Sir Hastings Doyle, who commanded the troops, and was also Governor in Nova Scotia, it was decided we should go round by Boston,

Massachusetts, whence there was a good railway service to Montreal.

The "Trent Affair" had been apologized for, the Southern envoys had been sent back to us, and war had been thus happily averted. It was, however, thought desirable in Halifax that we should erase the military titles attached to the names on our baggage, and we were warned to show ourselves in public places there as little as possible.

In those days the Cunard Mail Steamers from Liverpool called at Halifax *en route* for Boston, so we all started in the first of those vessels to arrive there. On board of her were several charming New-England people, and amongst them one or two gentlemen whom I had met in China. As we steamed into Boston Harbour, one of them, who had been extremely kind to all of us during the voyage, explained to me the points of general interest in the surrounding scenery. Up to that date I had never read any good work upon the war in which General Washington had won independence from our unwise King, and from his idiotic Minister, Lord North. Sir George Trevelyan's charming and classic work on the subject has since taught most of us the story of Bunker's Hill; but in those days few Englishmen knew much about the American War of Independence beyond the fact that we had got the worst of it throughout all its phases. I had of course often heard of Bunker's Hill, and in a vague way I had always imagined it was the name of one of the many victories our old colonists had won over us in their revolutionary war. When my American friend therefore waved his hand solemnly towards the hill named after Mr. Bunker, calling my attention to it, not wishing to show my besotted ignorance of American history, I said with an enforced sigh, intended to express

my sorrow for our defeat upon that occasion: "Ah! that was a dreadful disaster for us." In an instant I realized how absolutely I had "put my foot in it," for it at once brought forth the rejoinder: "I beg your pardon, sir, Bunker's Hill was a victory for the English." I have never felt more "shut up" in my life. May I venture to hope that the English boys of to-day are better instructed in American history than they were when I wore a jacket, and was not allowed pockets in my trousers lest I should always have my hands in them.

When we landed, we encountered from all we met that mixture of kindness and hospitality which are the most prominent characteristics of the American gentleman. My friend from China took me and another officer to see all the remarkable sights in what was then the very English-looking city of Boston. In the Stock Exchange we met with a sort of ovation from the very men who had so recently denounced England, "lock, stock and barrel, Bob and sinker." I was shown the relics of well won victories over us in their great War of Independence. Over these trophies was hung a shield charged with the Washington family arms, and I then heard for the first time that the "Stripes" of the United States standard had been copied from that escutcheon, both in shape and colour. Perhaps many English people may even still be as ignorant of that fact as I was then.

A long and a very dreary journey in an American railway carriage brought us to the bright and cheerful and beautifully-placed city of Montreal. Oh! how cold that journey was! And how glad I was to find myself at last in the stuffy rooms of a Canadian hotel.

Sir Fenwick Williams of Kars was then the general

commanding in British North America, a very handsome old gentleman, with charming manners. There was a great deal of work to be got through in the hiring of suitable buildings for conversion into temporary barracks, and in the provision of furniture and stores, etc. But I was in a few days sent off to Rivière de Loup, then the most Eastern terminus of the Grand Trunk Railway. My orders were to make all the necessary arrangements for the housing for one night, and the daily despatch to Montreal of the detachments arriving there in sledges from Nova Scotia. A more tedious or a more uncomfortable railway journey I never had than that I then made from Montreal to Rivière de Loup. The carriages were dirty and very stuffy, and the only food obtainable at the station was simply garbage. Fortunately there was a French-Canadian gentleman going as far as Quebec, who had a well-stored hamper supplied for his journey by a careful wife. He kindly allowed me to share in his good things. A brace of Canadian priests and some "habitants," all muffled up in buffalo skin coats, and one or two local commercial travellers, were the only occupants of the "sleeping car," in which I travelled for over thirty-six hours.

The military staff at Rivière de Loup consisted of a medical officer—now Sir Antony Home, V.C. and K.C.B., who had been the surgeon in charge of my battalion throughout the Indian Mutiny—and a commissary general. The former, the most highly gifted and educated of interesting companions, was one of the ablest military doctors I ever knew. It was a real boon to find such a comrade in that most out-of-the-way corner of our empire. No one in the village could speak English, and I had to learn a little of the Canadian-French patois "to get along with." I had

plenty of time for reading; I sketched a little, and learned to walk on snow shoes. Upon inquiry I found that the seigneur was Scotch by descent, and although he could not speak English he maintained the credit of his Scotch forebears by a decided predilection for whisky. He lived in a good house surrounded by what was in summer very possibly a pretty garden. He told me he had inherited his surname from his great-grandfather, who had been a subaltern officer or a sergeant—I forget which—in Wolf's army at the taking of Quebec, and that, like many other important Highlanders in that army, his forefather had been given a French seigneury, that of Rivière de Loup being the reward for his services. Since then, by inter-marriage, the family had become French in all but name and the colour of their hair.

In early days I had read Fenimore Cooper's novels with great pleasure. They were "boys' stories" in every sense, full of adventures in the backwoods, and of fights with painted and feather-bedecked Indians. Their cruel practice of scalping all those whom they killed made the relation of their chivalrous acts and fidelity to their promises, all the more deeply interesting to a boy. Here I found myself in a primitive settlement of small wooden houses on the edge of the great, mysterious forest that was still frequented by the bear and many sorts of big game, and yet I had not seen any descendant of "Roaring Bull" or of the lovely "Minnehaha." I mentioned my surprise upon this point to the Commissariat Officer with me, who had spent many years in Canada. He said: "Oh! there are many Micmacs about, and they are the great moose hunters in these parts. I see their chief very often, and if you would like to have a visit from him I am sure he

would be delighted to call upon you." I said I should much like to see him.

A few days afterwards I was reading in my little room in the inn, when my honest old soldier servant came in to announce a visitor. My man was a curious old "file," who never laughed, and, without being at all grave in disposition, seemed to have no appreciation of a joke nor of the amusing side of life. But when anything occurred out of the usual current of his daily occupations that would have interested or amused most men, his sentences partook of grunts more than of ordinary expressions of opinion, or than any common description of the event he wished to report. "There is a man downstairs, sir, who says the Commissary Officer has sent him to see you." "Oh, that must be the old Indian chief; bring him up." In a few minutes my solemn servitor ushered in an extremely dirty looking fellow, who announced himself by a high-sounding Indian title. As soon as the door was shut, a horrible smell of whisky pervaded my little room. My Indian friend was in no sense drunk, but—as I was subsequently informed—whenever he visited the little village of Rivière de Loup—once possibly the capital of his forebear's dominions—he spent whatever money he possessed in the strong burning intoxicating waters which the local publican—my landlord—in defiance of the law on that point, sold him liberally.

I expected, in my then ignorance of the country, to have seen a fine, dignified-looking chief, dressed in furs and feathers, and endowed with the solemnity of manners that pertained to the Indians described in *Masterman Ready*, that most thrilling of boy's books. But I saw before me merely a watery-eyed old rascal, without any glimmer of distinction that could tell you he sprang from a long line

of at least manly ancestors. He began by expressions of devoted loyalty to "the Great Mother," our Queen, about whom all the Indians I ever came to know in North America were always most deeply interested, and of whom they spoke as other men would speak of a heavenly deity. He showed me a very fine silver medal that he wore fastened to a string round his neck, and which he said with pride had been given to his great-grandfather by King George III. It was quite four inches in diameter, and had a fine representation of His Majesty on one side, and an engraved inscription on the other. I should have liked to buy it, but I never met with or heard of any Indian chief who would part upon any terms with such medals. They are not only their "title-deeds" to their chieftainship, and to the territorial possessions they claim—and with justice claim—but they are regarded with the sort of superstitious reverence that the pilgrim from some holy place attaches to the sacred relic obtained there.

I had some interesting talk with this most voluble of North American chiefs. He spoke of the former greatness of his tribe, contrasting it with his own poverty. When the time came for me to bid him good-bye, as I shook hands with him I gave him a half-crown piece that I happened to have in my pocket at the moment, although I felt sure he would forthwith spend it on drink. He looked at it a moment, and as he turned his eyes once more upon me, he said: "Won't you make it a dollar?" I felt truly sorry for him in my heart, especially as I knew that his degradation was the result of the white man's rule, and before the booted European had ever been seen in the forests of Canada, their Indian inhabitants led a healthy life of savagery undegraded by the craving which we had

imbued them with for strong drink—that accursed poison which Europeans introduce into all lands they invade.

Except that every day about a hundred British soldiers spent the night in the village, their officers being accommodated in the little inn where I lodged, I lived very much as I should do in a foreign country. The life was monotonous, and I began to realize that a country covered with several feet of snow for about half the year did not afford the most beautiful of landscapes. I was not sorry when I saw my last detachment through the station, and was able to follow in its wake to Montreal. There I soon settled down, and spent several happy years amongst very pleasant people. I made many trips to the United States, and made friends, with some of whom I have ever since been intimate. I lived at Montreal, then our military headquarters in North America, and had the advantage of serving there for some time under Colonel Jock Mackenzie, who was my immediate master. From him I learnt a great deal professionally. He was a first rate staff officer, a most genial companion, a gentleman in all the highest acceptation of that term, and a firm and most lovable friend.

Life in Montreal was very pleasant. Of course I bought horses and a sledge, in which I daily drove very charming women, both Canadian and American. Some extremely nice Southerner families had taken refuge in Montreal, and added much to its social amusements. There was a skating rink where every one performed daily on the ice, a regimental band adding much zest to the exercise. The garrison consisted of two battalions of Foot Guards, one of the Line and a battery of Field Artillery. The general commanding the troops in the province of Quebec—to which Montreal belongs—was Sir James Lindsay, an able energetic soldier,

whose heart was in his work, and one of the most charming men I ever knew. He was the life and soul of the place, and as great a favourite with the Canadians as he was with the troops under his command. We had very successful garrison theatricals in the winter, and many were the sledge expeditions we made into the neighbouring country. Altogether, it was an elysium of bliss for young officers, the only trouble being to keep single. Several impressionable young captains and subalterns had to be sent home hurriedly to save them from imprudent marriages. Although these Canadian ladies were very charming they were not richly endowed with worldly goods.

It was at this time that I made the acquaintance of Lord Mount-Stephen, now one of my oldest and best of friends, and to whom I dedicate these volumes. It is to his pluck and enterprise we are chiefly indebted for the great railway which, running over the Rocky Mountains, unites the British provinces on the Pacific with those in the valley of the St. Lawrence and on the seaboard of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XXXV

Visit to the Confederate Army, 1862

BEFORE the Great Republic of the West had completed a century of independent national existence, a terrible internecine war threatened its destruction. The events at the time monopolized the attention of all the soldiers and statesmen in the civilized world. It was an attempt upon the part of the Southern States to sever their political connexion with the United States, and to set up for themselves as an independent Commonwealth. That war was full of incidents which do honour to both belligerents, now again one nation. But its history also contains many lessons for all non-military nations, ourselves for example, whose Army affairs are ruled in an absolute fashion by a political civilian as War Minister.

The result of the battle of "Bull Run," in July, 1861, had taught Mr. Lincoln's Government the absurdity of having trusted to a purely civilian army to put down this attempt on the part of the Southern States. That novel experiment "had proved a terrible failure. The nation that had lately been so confident of capturing Richmond, was now anxious for the security of Washington." [1]

[1] This refers to the period when the battle of Antietam was fought. See p. 210, vol. i., of the late Colonel Henderson's delightful and instructive work on *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil*

The shrewd, the wise Mr. Lincoln seems to have quickly taken in the position. Hitherto he had listened too much to his Ministers, but now he turned for advice to professional soldiers, as he would have done to the best available surgeon had he broken his leg. Thenceforth every effort was made, with the best military assistance available, to create a fighting army upon military lines, the component parts of which should be capable of acting together in a well planned, well understood scheme of campaign.

But Mr. Davis, on the other hand, though honest and hardworking and with far abler military advisers round him, lacked the solid wisdom to follow Mr. Lincoln's example, being puffed up with a belief in his own superior wisdom. He seemed to think that because he was clever, could speak upon most topics very glibly, and was undoubtedly a sharp, able politician, he must therefore be also fully competent to rule an army and to devise military campaigns. In the manipulation of party questions he knew himself to be far superior to Generals Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Johnson, and the other eminent strategists at his command: may he not in all good faith, though in equally wide folly, have argued to himself that he must therefore be also a better judge upon all important military questions? I can account for his conduct in no other way, any more than I can explain to my own inward satisfaction how it is that Mr. John Bull, so wise in commerce and in the everyday government of his great public business, should always prefer to place the healthy well-being

War. I wish all our officers would read it. They would find its well told story as intensely interesting as its teaching is sound and full of useful advice for all Englishmen of to-day. Colonel Henderson's death was not only a serious loss to the army, but to the nation also.

and efficiency of his army in the hands of a quack, rather than confide them to a skilled professional soldier.

Mr. Davis' views upon strategy were opposed to all the teaching of military history. He insisted upon trying to hold too much territory, and by doing so was forced into a wide dispersal of his few and small available armies. He expended his strength upon distant projects where success even could have had little influence upon the great struggle he had embarked upon. His military advisers urged upon him the immediate necessity for the concentration of all his military strength. But, on the other hand, his political colleagues, to whom the immutable laws of strategy were unsolved riddles, pressed him to attack the Federal States upon what would appear to have been all the sixteen northern points of the compass; and he agreed with them.

Surely, if ever there was a cause lost through ignorance of the soldier's science on the part of those into whose hands a trusting people had confided it, the cause of Confederate Independence was lost in 1862 by the military folly of Mr. Davis and of the civilian colleagues who surrounded him.

Throughout the summer of 1862 I had followed every move of the two belligerent American armies as closely as I could on the only maps obtainable of the Southern States. The attempts made by General MacClellan and other Northern leaders to reach Richmond were seriously studied as military problems by most of our officers serving in Canada, several of whom had visited the Northern armies, and had met with great kindness from all concerned. But we could obtain no trustworthy information regarding the Southern plans, or operations, or mode of fighting. The

idea therefore struck me that, although it would be difficult to get through the Northern States to Richmond as a travelling gentleman, the attempt would be well worth making. I knew from personal experience how much all loafers are hated at the Headquarters of every army in the field. But I felt a sort of justification in presuming to inflict myself upon the staff of the Confederate army, should I succeed in joining it, because I had myself so often been similarly bored by the presence of travelling gentlemen at the Headquarters of armies with which I happened to be serving in the field.

I obtained two months' leave from the general officer commanding in Canada, who had, however, no notion of what my plans were.

Lord Edward St. Maur, who had recently been travelling in the United States, had stayed a few days with me in Canada before he left for England. We had talked much of the events of the war between the Northern and Southern States, and of the recent operations of their respective armies. Influenced by what he told me of Southern affairs, I made up my mind that I would try, by hook or by crook, to reach the army of Virginia then commanded by that greatest of all modern leaders, General Lee. Lord Edward St. Maur gave me a letter to a friend of his in Baltimore, who, he said, was in a position to advise me as to how I could most easily accomplish that object. He was a rich Southerner of the very best sort, and no praise could be higher.

When I was passing through New York on my way South, the world was startled by the news that General Lee had assumed the offensive, had crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, and was marching upon Washington.

This news spread dismay in Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet. They had tried all sorts of generals, and one after another, all had failed to reach Richmond or defeat General Lee, still more to bring the South into subjection. In other words, those generals had been soundly beaten. General MacClellan, by far the best of them—cried up at first as a "second Napoleon"—had not fulfilled the expectations of his countrymen. He was said to be a cunctator, and was dismissed. Then came a series of very inferior generals, who talked big and did nothing. One had announced, upon assuming command, that "thenceforth his headquarters would be in the saddle." But before many weeks I saw that saddle and all his smart uniform exhibited in the shop windows of a Richmond tailor, the result of his defeat.

Mr. Lincoln and his advisers were at their wits' end. Here was the redoubtable Lee actually across the Potomac with an army marching upon Washington. What was to be done? With his usual clear-sightedness, Mr. Lincoln at once determined to recall General MacClellan, whom he had so lately dismissed. He realized that, with all his shortcomings, he was the only leader known then in the Union States who could restore public confidence. He alone had sufficient reputation with the Northern soldiers to bring them again together as an army. It required to be a really sound and thoroughly good army that would have any chance against the army of Lee, a general of whom all the old officers of the United States army most justly had the highest opinion.

I do not wish to overload my story with descriptions of wars in which I took no part. I shall only, therefore, refer in a general way to the position of the two hostile

armies then facing one another in the valley of the Potomac.

The Southern cause in Virginia throughout the spring and summer of 1862 had been very successful. General MacClellan with his splendidly equipped army had been driven from "the peninsula," and the boastful General Pope had been made short work of on the Rappahannock. Both had utterly failed in their attempt to reach Richmond, and their defeated and demoralized troops had taken refuge near Washington. They were unable to cope with General Lee's army, though it was far inferior in strength. In fact, the Confederates had won all along the line, thanks to the ably conceived and well calculated strategy of that great Virginian leader, to the brilliant tactics of Stonewall Jackson and other capable soldiers, and to the superior fighting qualities of their splendid and patriotic rank and file. That campaign was a masterpiece both in conception and in execution, and did high honour to the soldierlike spirit and patriotism of the ill-shod, overworked, and badly clothed regimental officers and men of the Southern army. According to my notion of military history, there is as much instruction, both in strategy and tactics, to be gleaned from General Lee's but little studied operations of 1862 as there is to be found in Napoleon's campaign of 1796, which we all read so attentively and recommend others to master thoroughly, and to inwardly digest.

Throughout the early part of 1862 General Lee's strategy had been of the defensive order, whilst his tactics were decidedly offensive in character. Though badly found in all the weapons, ammunition, military equipment, etc., required for soldiers in the field, his army had nevertheless achieved great things. He already felt that his men had

learnt self confidence by victory and the pride it inspires, and he as naturally assumed that the defeats suffered by the Northern troops must have had the reverse effect upon their morale as soldiers. This led him to believe that the time had come when he should assume a vigorous strategical offensive. His plan was therefore to strike boldly at Washington, the Federal capital. Its capture would naturally have a great moral effect, not only all over the American continent, but also in Europe.

Up to the autumn of 1862 it may be said, that the military policy of the Confederacy had been merely of an offensive-defensive character. War with all its horrors had not yet been brought home to the Northern people by any invasion of their territory. Why not invade Maryland and take Washington, the Federal seat of Government? The renown of such an achievement would go farther towards winning independence for the Confederacy than any number of great victories won in defence of Richmond. This was General Lee's opinion, and Mr. Davis accepted it. Stone wall Jackson had long urged this policy of invasion upon the Government in Richmond, but the civilians who ruled there did not understand war's grim science well enough to adopt it at once. However, on September 6, 1862, Lee's army, nearly 60,000 strong, of whom about 4,000 were mounted troops, crossed the Potomac into Maryland at Harper's Ferry. But the men were so badly shod—indeed, a considerable proportion had no boots or shoes—that at the battle of Antietam which followed, as General Lee subsequently assured me, he never had more than about 35,000 men with him. The remainder of his army, shoeless and footsore, were straggling along the roads in rear, trying in vain to reach him in time for the battle.

His worst enemy would not accuse Lee of untruth in any shape, so, my reader, you can safely take that estimate to be the number of soldiers with which he attacked and nearly defeated General MacClellan's great army at Antietam.

The Southern armies were in great and sore need of boots, blankets, and clothing of all sorts. It was felt that the capture of Washington would supply them with all they stood most in need of.

It was then a common idea in many quarters that the French Emperor was anxious to recognize the independence of the Confederate States, and was only prevented from adopting that course by England's refusal to join him in it. How far that may have been true I know not.

I was travelling in company with a dear friend, Sir William Muir, the principal medical officer in Canada, whom I had long known well. We had reached Philadelphia, and there we decided to separate, as he was most anxious to study the medical arrangements of the Northern forces, and I longed to get into Dixey's land to see General Lee's redoubtable army. I consequently made for Baltimore, believing that General Lee would carry everything before him in Maryland, as he had already done in Virginia. There I should be in a good position to join him in Washington, which I thought he would reach in the course of a few days. Immediately upon arrival in Baltimore, I presented that one letter of introduction to which I have already referred, and was received with the utmost cordiality by the gentleman to whom it was addressed.

Baltimore was occupied by a strong Northern force under a general with a German name. He was hated by the inhabitants, who were decidedly Southern in their sympathies. I was told that he returned this feeling by being

positively cruel to all classes of the community. I then realized how intense was the feeling between the two camps into which the United States were then divided. Almost all the young Baltimore gentlemen had joined General Lee's army, so, except the officers of the Northern garrison, very few men of the better classes were to be seen in the streets. Extreme courtesy to women is a strong trait in the American character. But, on the other hand, so pronounced was the intense loathing entertained by the ladies of Baltimore for all whom they regarded as their oppressors, that they would hold no converse with them. I have seen a lady in the streets when she encountered what she would have contemptuously styled a "Yankee officer," get close up against the wall on the inner side of the footpath, and draw in the skirts of her dress to mark her horror of allowing them to be defiled by touching him as he passed. He could do nothing, and when I referred to this practice in conversation, I could see how much it amused the lady actors in this little drama. They well knew how keenly it went to the hearts of men who pride themselves upon their chivalrous respect for the weaker sex. Hence the enjoyment it afforded them.

I told my newly acquired friend how anxious I was to reach General Lee's headquarters, and he at once said he would gladly arrange for my passage into Virginia by what was then known amongst Southerners as the "Underground Route." Official messengers went daily backwards and forwards between the authorities in Richmond and their friends in Maryland, and there was naturally a considerable amount of smuggling going on across the Lower Potomac in quinine, tea, coffee, sugar, and other little things which the South did not produce. Great prices were paid for all

those articles, and although the smugglers were often caught, others were easily found to take their place in so lucrative a trade.

Upon my return to Canada, I dealt at some length upon all I saw and heard during my visit to the Confederacy in an article published in the January number of *Blackwood* for 1863. I had never before written anything for any periodical, and sent it home in no confident spirit that it would even be inserted. I did not know Mr. John Blackwood then, but I had long been a constant reader of his far-famed Magazine. To my intense delight, it was not only given the foremost place in the January number, of 1863, but I received a charming note from him, in which to my astonishment he enclosed a cheque for forty pounds, or guineas.

I was very much struck with the difference in bearing of the Baltimore gentlefolk towards me, a stranger—except as far as my one letter of introduction went—and the manner in which I was treated whenever I approached any of the United States authorities at this time. The fact of being an officer in the Queen's service was a sufficient introduction to any Southern gentleman, whilst it made little impression upon the Northerner.

The first day of my stay in Baltimore, when lunching with my newly made friend at his club, he asked me what I intended doing that evening. Upon saying I had no engagements, he said, "Would you like to go to a ball?" "Very much," was my answer. "Then if you will come to our house at"—I forget the hour—"you can go to a ball with us," or words to that effect. Accordingly at the hour named I found myself seated in his drawing-room, where the only other occupant was a nice old lady. She made herself extremely pleasant, and in a short time the

door opened and there entered a very pretty girl, of about eighteen, I should say. I was introduced to her, and she asked me with a very attractive smile, "Are you ready?" I stammered out, "Yes." She kissed the old lady, who was her grandmother, and of whom I took my formal leave. We two, the young girl and myself, drove off in a brougham some miles into the country. It was a capital ball; I danced and spent most of the evening with my charming companion, and was most hospitably entertained by the delightful owner of the house. Nothing could be kinder than the reception I had from all those I met at the ball, and yet not one in the room had ever heard of me before; but I was an English gentleman—that was enough for the kind, hospitable, and well born people of Maryland. After supper, and very late on into the night, or I should say early the following morning, my most attractive partner and I drove back to Baltimore, where she dropped me at my inn. I had had a delightful evening, though I felt somewhat shy at what was to me the unusual position in which I found myself. But to this well born young lady and her family the proceeding did not seem in any way odd or unusual.

I may as well say here that there is, or at least was, when I had the privilege of knowing many ladies from the Southern States, an unspeakable charm and fascination about them that is rarely to be met with in the women of any other country. I have described that evening's entertainment because its events were unlike those of our own dull and formal procedure in England. And yet I am as certain as I can be of anything in the world that in every respect the ladies of the South were as strictly modest and circumspect as those of my own country. They were, however, more

trusted by their parents, and I believe that such trust was never misplaced.

In a few days my kind friend had made every arrangement for my "underground passage," and also for that of the Honble. Frank Lawley, the recently arrived *Times* Correspondent. He too had been sent to my Baltimore friend to get him safely across the Potomac into Virginia. He had been Mr. Gladstone's private secretary, and was well known in London society. A fine, handsome man, and just eight years my senior, he had seen much of political and social life, and had sounded all its depths and shoals. I never knew anyone with a more charming voice or a more seductive manner. Wherever he went in America he was recognized as being very like the best pictures of the great General Washington, a fact in itself that recommended him strongly to all classes both north and south of the Potomac River. Highly cultivated, he wrote well and like an educated gentleman. He was a delightful companion, and during the time I spent in his company I never had a dull quarter of an hour.

We started eventually from Baltimore in a two-horse buggy hired for the trip. The driver was a "rebel," who knew the country well and every gentleman's house where he could conceal us when necessary. My Baltimore friend assured us we could rely upon his devotion and loyalty. The country we passed through was mostly well cultivated, but here and there the loss of slaves since the war began showed already its effects upon many farms. In several localities the tobacco was running to seed from want of field hands to care for that valuable crop. We met many farmers, but all looked cowed from the treatment

received from the United States mounted troops then ceaselessly patrolling their country.

Amongst the gentlemen's houses we stayed at was that built by the first Lord Baltimore, and then still occupied by the Calverts, who claimed to be his descendants. They entertained us most hospitably, although they said that many of their slaves had been taken away by what they called "Yankee patrols." Over the chimneypiece in their dining-room was a picture of Lord Baltimore, said to be by Vandyke, and the whole house had an English charm about it. Built of red brick about two centuries before, it resembled many of the small old manor houses so often to be seen at home. Every brick had on it a Staffordshire mark. This astonished me, until my host explained that, when it was built, many ships trading between England and her settlements on the Potomac used to make the outward voyage with bricks as ballast.

After several disagreeable interviews with patrols of the recently raised United States cavalry, we at last reached a secluded spot on the river bank. There we spent the night in the loft of an old tumbledown shed belonging to a small farmer who had recently taken to the more lucrative, but more risky, occupation of smuggling.

Our accommodation was not first rate. I had a dirty sack for a pillow, but was soon sound asleep. Roused, however, by some noise about midnight, I saw Frank Lawley with the end of a lighted candle in one hand and a stick in the other chasing the rats which swarmed there, and which had been, he said, running over him very freely. I laughed and recommended him to take an old campaigner's advice and go to sleep, rats or no rats.

Before I could get to sleep again I found the rats had

taken to running freely over me also. When the morning sun subsequently enabled me to see clearly around, I took in why it was the rats had paid us so much attention during the night. The sack that had been my pillow was filled with salt pork, the daily food of the slaves, who from long custom prefer it to all fresh meat.

This was my travelling companion's début in campaigning life, and the rats were then a little too much for him. In a year's time from that date I have no doubt he had learnt to sleep well, even when rats ran freely about him as they had done the night we spent together in that horrid loft by the Potomac River. The night had been one of bad smells, of rats and of dirt, but so far we had been fortunate in escaping capture by the Northern patrols. That was our chief care.

When day broke the view was delightful. The sun was rising over the river where it formed our eastern horizon. There was a stillness, a silence everywhere. There was not even a ripple upon the smooth river surface on which the masts and yards and hanging sails of becalmed neighbouring ships were reflected as we see them in pictures by Vanderveldt.

The scene was beautiful, but the smuggler appreciated only the rising mist and the gentle wind that promised him both concealment and a smooth crossing. Now and then, however, his countenance fell as he saw, or thought he had discovered, some hostile gunboat approaching through the haze. He hugged the northern bank and kept amongst the reeds as much as possible, to avoid the searching range of the naval telescope, of which instrument he told us marvellous stories and was much in dread.

We dropped slowly up the river with the flowing tide,

and when it turned the boat was anchored close to shore, whilst its living freight took refuge in a neighbouring shed surrounded with bushes and tall reeds. At sunset we were off again, when, after some hours of fluctuating feelings ranging from what seemed to be the horrible certainty of detection to the delightful hope and expectation that we had escaped unseen, we at last reached the creek on the Virginia shore to which our dealer in contraband goods was bound. His face had been throughout an interesting study to me. Extreme nervous anxiety was depicted upon it from start to finish, which at times settled down into dark despair when once or twice detection seemed inevitable. And it was but natural, for he had a wife and family whose means of living were most probably dependent upon the success of this venture. It was a valuable one to him, for he had a full boatload of tea, coffee, and sugar on board, and we had to pay him very handsomely for the extra risks he ran upon our account. Upon landing, we at once fell into the hands of a Confederate cavalry patrol, whose commanding officer was a charming young Southern gentleman. He said with many well spoken apologies that he must take us as prisoners to Fredericksburg, which was his headquarters. He treated us as his equals and with every kindness in his power. From Fredericksburg we went on to Richmond by rail. The road was extremely rough and jolting, and many in the crowd of badly wounded men in the train had recently had their legs amputated. That train opened Frank Lawley's eyes to the horrible side of war, made all the more horrible in this instance because no chloroform or medical appliances of any sort were available.

We had some difficulty in obtaining the humblest accom-

modation in the overcrowded but beautiful city of Richmond. The place was densely packed with human beings of all classes. I called upon the Secretary of State for War, a man with charming manners, who was kindness itself to us. Piled round his room in great bundles were the handsome United States colours and standards taken during the recent fighting in the neighbourhood. I told him I should like to visit the surrounding country, lately the scene of such hard fighting, and expressed a wish to visit the batteries at Drury's Bluff on the Potomac. At the last-named position the officer in command was Captain Lee, late of the United States navy, a brother of the Southern Commander-in-Chief. With the utmost grace of manner he at once acceded to my requests.

Hundreds of fresh graves marked the corners where the fire had been hottest on the battlefields I visited in the neighbourhood of Cold Harbour and Mechanicsville. I was accompanied by an educated officer, kindly sent with me to explain minutely every phase of those battles. Each and all of them were remarkable for many reasons, amongst others from the fact that the great masses engaged on both sides consisted almost entirely of undisciplined, untrained, and even of most imperfectly drilled troops. From the beginning of the war I had closely followed its events, but I had not realized how difficult was the country through which MacClellan had fought in the hope of reaching Richmond until I had driven and walked over much of it. However, I shall not enter into details regarding a campaign since then so well described by many able pens.

To wander over fields where lately two English-speaking armies had met in deadly strife was a sad but an instructive opportunity for a British colonel. The military débris of

MacClellan's army covered acres of ground, and many thousands of Lee's soldiers, I was assured, had found there the arms, equipment, and clothing which they needed so much. Throughout this part of the long struggle it may be truthfully asserted that the Union Government clothed and armed and supplied with artillery not only its own forces but practically the Southern armies also.

Much if not most of the fighting near Richmond had been in woods, and it was curious to note where field batteries had cut long alleys through them, and where shells had exploded in the trunks of forest giants. In many places, the woods were riddled with bullets.

The explanation of the movements of the two armies by the young officer who acted as my guide was clear and interesting. He pointed out where Lee had attacked in front whilst Stonewall Jackson had done so in flank, and where MacClellan had only escaped utter destruction through the non-execution of Lee's orders. But the staff officers on both sides were at first of little use. They did their best, but they knew next to nothing of their business, nor indeed of either strategy or tactics.

Having seen everything of military interest at Richmond that my time would admit of, I was anxious to get to General Lee's army as soon as possible, for the end of my period of leave from Canada drew near. The Minister of War was most kind, and helped me in every way. When he signed my passport to enable me to visit the army, he gave me a private note to General Lee, in which he wrote to this effect: "I have not asked Colonel Wolseley to take the usual oath that he would disclose nothing of what he sees here to our enemies, because I know I can rely upon the honour of an English officer." I was sensibly touched by

this expression of confidence in the honour of the British gentleman, and it made me weigh all the more carefully what I wrote and said regarding my experiences in "Dixey-land" when I once more found myself under the Union Jack.

I left Richmond by a very early train, and in the evening found myself at Staunton, then the railway terminus in the already much fought-over Shenandoah Valley, celebrated for its beautiful scenery, fertility, and numerous historical associations. I spent a rather trying night at the Staunton inn, crowded as it was with hungry soldiers of all grades. Thence I had to find my way as best I could for ninety miles to General Lee's Headquarters at Winchester. He had established his army there after his recent unsuccessful attack upon MacClellan's position at Antietam. The journey was a dreary proceeding of several days, and made in a returning empty ambulance waggon of a rickety nature. That four-wheeled conveyance required repairs and continued nursing to keep it in working order. Fortunately, however, the road was a fairly good one, being, as I was told, the only macadamized highway in the State. We passed numerous large parties of convalescents on their way back to the army, nearly all of whom looked more suited for the hospital than for a cold bivouac. The nights at the time were bitterly cold, and the men's clothing most insufficient. What misery, what hardships those poor Southern soldiers underwent, whilst their highly paid, well clothed and well fed enemies, who had been collected, not only from the Northern States but from all parts of Europe, were luxuriously provided for.

I shall not describe that journey, made necessarily under very uncomfortable circumstances. But I reached my

destination, Winchester, in the morning of my fourth day's march. In that overcrowded little town I made the best arrangement I could for bed and board during the time I was to be in the neighbourhood.

As soon as I could do so I proceeded to General Lee's Headquarters, about six miles out of the town, on the road to Harper's Ferry. Every incident in that visit to him is indelibly stamped on my memory. I have taken no special trouble to remember all he said to me then and during subsequent conversations, and yet it is still fresh in my recollection. But it is natural it should be so, for he was the ablest general, and to me, seemed the greatest man I ever conversed with; and yet I have had the privilege of meeting Von Moltke and Prince Bismarck, and at least upon one occasion had a very long and intensely interesting conversation with the latter. General Lee was one of the few men who ever seriously impressed and awed me with their natural, their inherent greatness. Forty years have come and gone since our meeting, yet the majesty of his manly bearing, the genial winning grace, the sweetness of his smile and the impressive dignity of his old-fashioned style of address, come back to me amongst the most cherished of my recollections. His greatness made me humble, and I never felt my own individual insignificance more keenly than I did in his presence. He was then about fifty years of age, with hair and beard nearly white. Tall, extremely handsome and strongly built, very soldier-like in bearing, he looked a thoroughbred gentleman. Care had, however, already wrinkled his brow, and there came at moments a look of sadness into his clear, honest, and speaking dark brown eyes that indicated how much his overwhelming national responsibility had already told

upon him. As he listened to you attentively, he seemed to look into your heart and to search your brain. He spoke of the future with confidence, though one could clearly see he was of no very sanguine temperament. He deplored the bitterness introduced into the struggle, and also the treatment of the Southern folk who fell into hostile hands. But there was no rancour in his tone when he referred to the Northern Government. Not even when he described how they had designedly destroyed his home at Arlington Heights, the property on the Potomac he had inherited from General Washington. He had merely "gone with his State"—Virginia—the pervading principle that had influenced most of the soldiers I spoke with during my visit to the South. His was indeed a beautiful character, and of him it might truthfully be written: "In righteousness he did judge and make war."

I ventured to mention his recent battle at Antietam Creek, and he at once talked of its incidents in a frank, open way. He assured me, as I have already stated, that at no period of it had he more than 35,000 men in action, the remainder of his troops being shoeless stragglers in rear, unable to reach the front in time for his attack upon MacClellan's position. He estimated the Northern army then opposed to him at about twice his own strength. Things had gone wrong, as they so often unexpectedly do in war, and Jackson was thereby prevented from reaching the battlefield as soon as intended. He discussed the proceedings of the day most frankly, and with very full and interesting detail. He spoke very nicely of General MacClellan, and of the electric effect his reappointment to command the Northern army had had upon all its soldiers. It was this, I gathered from his conversation, that had, in

his opinion, alone saved Washington from capture by the army with which he had invaded Maryland. This recall of MacClellan had not been foreseen, as his recent campaign in the Peninsula had been so disastrous a failure. The well-known jealousy entertained of him by the Ministers, Staunton, Seward, and General Halleck, was so great, on account of the attachment felt for him by all ranks in the Northern army, that his recall to power had not been regarded as a possible factor in the calculation of chances which determined the invasion of Maryland.

The result was that when it did take place, Lee's immediate designs upon Washington were checkmated. The sudden irruption of a Southern army into Maryland had been, however, in many ways an advantage to the Confederacy. With about 35,000 men Lee had fought a drawn battle with MacClellan, then holding a well chosen position with about 70,000 Northern soldiers. In this very short campaign Lee had captured some 14,000 prisoners, over fifty guns, and great quantities of stores of all sorts. This he had done without loss in guns or prisoners on his side. In subsequently discussing the events of that day with General Longstreet, he assured me that if he had had but 5,000 fresh men towards evening he must have annihilated the Northern army. He said that many of his men were without ammunition, and that all had been exhausted by heavy marching for some days previously.

General Lee halted all the day after the battle in presence of the Northern army, and thus offered MacClellan battle, but the latter did not think it advisable to accept the challenge.

With the Southern army there was a total absence of all that is usually so satisfying to the artistic eye in the

camps and bivouacs of Europe. General Lee's Headquarters consisted of merely some seven or eight small tents pitched along a snake fence, where the ground was bad and rocky. The camp followers were all slaves, and the mounted orderlies—called "couriers" in America—usually slept in the open, under carts or waggons. There were no military bands, no guards or sentries about, no busy staff officers told off to interview visitors and keep them from worrying their general. In fact, there was nothing of the "pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war" to be seen in the camp of these earnest patriot soldiers. As I waited outside General Lee's tent whilst his Aide de Camp entered to tell him who I was, and to deliver to him my letter from the Confederate Secretary for War, I remarked it had the name of a Colonel of some New Jersey regiment printed largely upon it. Subsequently I chaffingly referred to the fact in my conversations with him. He laughed and said, "Oh, you will find every tent, every gun, even our blankets, accoutrements, and all the military equipment we possess, stamped with the United States initials."

Poor Southern people! they were not a manufacturing community, yet, with all the fighting instincts of our own Border races, they contrived to supply their most pressing military wants in accordance with the well known old Border motto, "You shall want ere I want."

Shortly afterwards I had the advantage of an interview with General Jackson, always spoken of then and to be remembered for all time as "Stonewall Jackson": a man of stern principles, who took seriously whatever he had to do and in whom the beautiful side to his character had been developed by this war. What a hero! and yet how

simple, how humble-minded a man! In manner he was very different from General Lee, and I can class him with no one whom I have ever met or read of in history. Like the great commander whom he served with such knightly loyalty, he was deeply religious, but more austere, more Puritan in type. Both were great soldiers, yet neither had any Gothlike delight in war. He did not, as Lee did, give one the idea of having been born to the hereditary right of authority over others. General Lee, the very type, physically and socially, of a proud Cavalier, would certainly have fought for his king had he lived when Rupert charged at Naseby; Jackson would have been more at home amongst Cromwell's Ironsides upon that fatal June 14. More than any one I can remember, Jackson seemed a man in whom great strength of character and obstinate determination were mated with extreme gentleness of disposition and with absolute tenderness towards all about him.

I had expected to see in Stonewall Jackson something of the religious moroseness we find attributed to the Commonwealth Puritan in our Restoration literature; but he was, instead, most genial and forthcoming during the extremely pleasant hour I spent in his tent. In repose it might be said there was something sad about the expression of this most remarkable man's face. As his impressive eyes met yours unflinchingly, you knew that his was an honest heart. His closely compressed lips might have lent a harsh coldness to his features had not his face been lit up by a fascinating smile which added to the intense benignity of expression that his Maker had stamped upon it. In all the likenesses I have seen of him this marked characteristic is wanting. But how rare it is to find it even in the pictures of saints and angels by the greatest artists. In their en-

deavours to represent it on canvas or in marble most have missed that bright light of highly gifted benevolence and spiritual contentment which, without doubt, must have pre-eminently distinguished the face of "Him whom they crucified."

Lee was a born aristocrat in features and in manner. There was nothing of these refined characteristics in Stonewall Jackson, a man with huge hands and feet. But he possessed an assured self-confidence, the outcome of an absolute trust in God, that inspired his soldiers with an unquestioning belief in him as their leader. They did not ask him where he was going: they were content to follow him. Many were the stories told me on this score during my stay in Virginia. On the march through a village one day a father standing at his door saw his boy go by in the ranks. "Where are you bound for?" asked the parent as he grasped his son's hand. "I don't know, but old Jack does," was the prompt reply. That was enough for this young soldier; it was enough for every man who fought under Stonewall Jackson.[1]

General Jackson spoke a good deal of a visit he had once paid to England, and referred with pleasure to much that he had seen here. He knew most of our great historic points of interest and was well read in the events which had made them famous. Before our conversation ended I asked him which of all the recollections he had carried away with him from England was that upon which his memory loved most to dwell. He thought for a couple of minutes,

[1] "Old Jack" was his nickname when a youth at the far-famed Military School of "Westpoint" (the best of such schools to be found in any country) and it was generally used by his soldiers during this great war as a term of affection for the leader they loved and would follow wherever he led them.

and then, turning upon me those remarkable eyes, lit up for the moment with a look of real enthusiasm, he answered, "The seven lancet windows in York Minster."

In the midst of a bloody war, in which his life was to be eventually given for his country, his thoughts were at least sometimes fixed upon peace as its blessed quiet appeals to most of us when in any of our glorious Gothic Cathedrals. I have often since then stood in front of those beautiful windows, but never without thinking of the great American patriot in whose thoughts the remembrance of them had been carried into the battlefields of Virginia.

I spent a very pleasant afternoon with General Longstreet, then highly esteemed as one of Lee's best fighting divisional leaders. He had an excellent staff about him, all of whom tried to vie with the admirable horsemanship of their general. Longstreet was very fond of horses, and rode very fine well bred animals. He was stout and florid in complexion, and looked much younger than either Lee or Stonewall Jackson. But his openly expressed hatred of Mr. Lincoln and of the Administration ruled over by that very remarkable man, was intense and bitter. When, after the war had ended, Longstreet took employment under the United States Government, his old Southern associates ceased to regard him with the affection and respect he had inspired them with upon many a well fought battlefield. A brilliant leader and a hard hitter, his stories of the war were most interesting. I saw his division march past. It was a remarkable sight and never to be forgotten, for it was unlike anything I have ever seen, or until then had ever imagined. The men were badly, I might say wretchedly, clothed, and still worse shod. But I was told that the very worst had stayed away from the ordeal of having to parade

their wretchedness before a stranger. I had pointed out to me many men of large properties who were then trudging along in the ranks, undistinguishable from the mass of those around them, except that, as a rule, each of them carried a toothbrush stuck into a buttonhole of his jacket! All their belts and pouches were marked in large letters with the U.S., which showed they had been taken from their enemy. They marched past well, and, poorly clad as they were, with a fine soldierlike bearing that convinced all onlookers like myself that they were no mere imported hirelings, but citizens fighting for a cause they believed in, were proud to suffer for, and were prepared to die for. This Southern army interested me beyond any army I ever saw before or since.

I had much difficulty in getting away from Virginia, and I confess I left General Lee's army with the deepest regret. It was an army of heroes fighting, practically without pay, for that they held dearest in life, their "States' rights."

It is for the dispassionate student of history to gauge: 1st, the extent to which free communication with the markets of Europe would have helped the Confederates; and, 2nd, what would have been the issue, as far as the Confederacy was concerned, had not Mr. Lincoln, with his shrewd and characteristic wisdom, acceded to our demand for the immediate surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell? How often since then have I speculated as to what would now be the distribution of national sovereignty upon the North American continent had our demand been then refused at Washington?

I would ask my reader to study what the Confederate States did achieve even when cut off, as they were, from all external help, and to remember the victories they won

with armies much smaller than those opposed to them, and composed of men often barefoot and hungry, as well as destitute of all military equipment beyond their rifles, field guns and ammunition they had taken in battle from their enemy. They were absolutely cut off from all the markets where they could have purchased what they so urgently needed; their cause indeed seemed hopeless.

I do not enter into the question of whether their eventual independence as a separate power would or would not have been a benefit to America generally or to the outside world. I confine myself exclusively to the question in its military and naval aspects. But as a close student of war all my life, and especially of this Confederate war, and with a full knowledge of the battles fought during its progress, and regarding this question as a simple military and naval problem, I believe that, had the ports of the Southern States been kept open to the markets of the world by the action of any great naval power, the Confederacy must have secured their independence. Such at least is the dispassionate opinion of an outsider. Surely the time has come when the men of what is now the greatest Power on earth—the present United States of America—can afford to hear such an opinion without any feeling against the soldier who states it for what it is worth. Of this at least I am certain, that no outsider can have a deeper, a more sincere admiration than I have for their institutions, their people, their great soldiers and sailors, as well as for their writers and men of science.

Had I been a "Southerner" in 1861 I would certainly have thrown in my lot with the Confederacy, for I believed that "right" in the abstract, in the legal sense, was on its side. But had I been a "Northerner," I would have

laughed at all notions of "States' rights." The United States would have been for me one Power, whole and indivisible, and I would have fought to the death sooner than have seen that power broken up upon any lawyer's plea regarding the interpretation of the words in which the "deed" of Union had been originally drafted. Such at the time was my view as an outsider of the all-absorbing question that was discussed in strong and excited language, both north and south of the Potomac, when Mr. Lincoln was elected President.

My own sympathy since boyhood has always been with the strongly national squire, who, when asked for an after-dinner toast, said: "Here's to England (cheers); may she always be in the right (still louder cheers), but, by heavens, gentlemen, here's to her, whether she be right or wrong!" (Deafening cheers.)

In the great American struggle I refer to, that old-fashioned squire's sentiment regarding England represented the feelings of both the Northern and Southern States for the cause each had adopted. Surely the true patriot of all nations must sincerely respect such a heartfelt sentiment of intense nationality, for is it not the only sound foundation upon which nations can continue to be great? And may I not assert with equal confidence that it is because that sentiment so deeply influences the hearts of the United States people that they have become the foremost nation in the world, far greater than Washington and his able colleagues could ever have hoped for or even dreamt of.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Reorganization of the Canadian Militia, 1864-5

THE "Trent Affair" had caused all Canadians to study seriously how defenceless would be their province should we be forced into war with the United States. Hitherto the people of Canada had been too prone to rely upon England for protection. Urged, however, by the Governor-General to adopt some line of military policy that would at least make those who ruled in "the old country" anxious to help them effectively in case of need, the Canadian Government now set to work upon the re-organization of their local Militia. The large cities and most of the important towns had already created some tolerably fair Volunteer battalions, but it was desirable to place all the local forces upon some better established military system, and, above all things, to model them upon the lines of our Regular Army, with which they would have to act in the event of war.

Upon the close of the Confederate war, the Canadian Government began at last to realize how unprotected was the long straggling frontier which divided their provinces from those of the United States. They perceived how open it was to any filibustering attempt on the part of the numerous Fenians who were then idle and anxious for a "light job."

Public opinion in Canada, excited on this point, soon compelled the party in power to adopt measures for the creation of an efficient defensive force. The first step towards the reorganization of the Canadian Militia, was to obtain the services of a thoroughly able soldier to organize and command it. His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge wisely selected General Patrick MacDougall for this duty, and no better selection could have been made. He was very able, highly educated as a soldier in his profession, and was gifted with the most charming, the most fascinating manner towards all men—by no means a poor recommendation for any one who has to get on well with politicians. He had also the great advantage of knowing Canada and its good people thoroughly, from having formerly served there many years.

The task before him was difficult, for some of the Canadian Militia officers, although they had other professional work to attend to, believed they knew more about soldiers and their science than those whose sole profession the Army had always been. They had some reason, however, for this belief, as the best of our Canadian officers, and those best were very good, had been long accustomed to much folly and many silly prejudices on the part of our old-fashioned and professionally ignorant Army officers. Even up to the date I am writing about, many of our old captains and colonels knew little of their work beyond the childish manœuvres of a barrack-yard parade ground. But our Canadian comrades had not then become aware of the fact that, since our war with Russia, a new army school had arisen amongst us, by whom the study of their profession, both as a science and an art, was recognized as all important.

No man knew better than General MacDougall the

difference there is between the educated officer and the ordinary amateur in uniform, and the best of the Canadian Militia soon came to recognize their new commandant's military worth, and the value of the new system he introduced. It was, however, very uphill work, for he never could induce Canadian Ministers to supply him with the funds required to start schools of instruction upon an adequate scale. There is no idle or "leisured" class in any part of Canada. Every one has to work there, and it is not easy for the hard-toiling man in any office to spare even a few hours per week for the study and practice of the military arts and science. Colonel MacDougall began the heavy task before him by the creation of an efficient Militia Staff, and of military schools at every station where we had regular troops. At these schools Militia officers were to be taught, and young Canadian gentlemen rendered fit for the position of officers. After these schools had been a season at work, he collected those who had qualified at them in a camp he formed at the old disused barrack of La Prairie, which is south of the St. Lawrence River, near Montreal. He asked me to be its Commandant, and, always anxious for any interesting employment, I gladly accepted the offer. These cadets were formed into two battalions, one of upper, the other of lower Canadians, and two excellent officers of the Canadian militia were selected to command them.

I found these young gentlemen delightful to deal with, all being seriously anxious to learn a soldier's work.

The more drill they were given the more they enjoyed their camp life. I may say, that it was at the La Prairie Camp, nearly all the best Militia officers of that generation were drilled and given some practical knowledge of military duties.

I found they made excellent officers; they were thinking and yet practical men, without any of the pedantry which too often clings to the young officers of all Regular Armies. My own experience of Canada, and of its fine loyal manly people, has taught me that England can always depend upon the Canadian Militia to supply her with a first-rate division under Canadian officers, who are not to be surpassed in military characteristics of a high order by any other troops. It is much to be regretted that the supply of officers required for our Royal Canadian Regiment is not left to the Governor-General of Canada, as none but Canadian gentlemen should, I think, be appointed to it. But military or colonial sentiment is not usually understood or appreciated by our civilian War Ministers.

One of the ablest, and professionally one of the best read officers I ever knew, is Colonel George Denison, of Toronto, who for many years commanded the Governor-General of Canada's Bodyguard. The descendant of many generations of gallant soldiers, who have, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fought for the British Crown in Canada, he would have been a military leader of note in any army he joined. It is much to be regretted that he did not adopt the Army as a profession. Had he done so he must have risen to eminence. He gained the prize offered by the Emperor of Russia for the best essay on cavalry, which was a great distinction, as it was open to the officers of all nations. During the annoyance caused to Canada by the Fenians, I came to know him well. With the Bodyguard he patrolled the left bank of the Niagara River above the falls whilst the excitement lasted. They were just the corps for that work,

and he was just the man to command them effectively. I realized at the time that no similar number of regular cavalry could have done that duty as effectively. But he was a man in a thousand, and a born cavalry leader.

The lieutenant-colonel of the French-speaking battalion was somewhat of a martinet, and an indefatigable worker. He was a great talker, and many amusing anecdotes were told of him. The instructions he gave were always accompanied by a voluble commentary upon the points he sought to emphasize, and many of his remarks were very personal to the individual he selected for either praise or blame. Under him any similar number of Englishmen would have mutinied, but he knew his men, and they took his dictatorial sarcasm in the best spirit, and as if it were quite usual in our Army.

As I stood on his parade ground one morning, listening to his teaching, I felt it difficult at times to look serious. In the middle of one of his long sentences a horrible noise was made by a man in the front rank as he spat in front of him. My French-speaking colonel rushed at him, and in the most angry tone exclaimed, "C'est défendu de cracher dans le rangs." No man in his battalion smiled, for all seemed to think it a most natural injunction.

I liked all those whom I met at this camp, and thoroughly enjoyed my life there. General the Hon. James Lindsay—a first-rate soldier and a most charming man—who was then commanding our troops in the Quebec province, helped me much, and took a deep interest in my work. He marched the Montreal Garrison of infantry and field artillery to La Prairie, and with my two battalions of cadets we had an instructive field day, which my embryo warriors thoroughly enjoyed. I refer thus to this La

Prairie Camp, because it was the birthplace of the very fine Canadian Militia force with which I was subsequently intimately associated, and because it was, I think, the first practical effort made to convert the excellent military material Canada possesses so abundantly, into useful soldiers. A considerable number of those trained at La Prairie subsequently accompanied me in the expedition I led in 1870 from Lake Superior to the Red River, and no commander could wish to have better soldiers than those of the two Canadian militia battalions who constituted the bulk of the brigade I then had with me. Our young officers of the regular army, are too prone to depend upon regulations which are apt to dwarf their natural military instincts in positions where the Canadian officer would act according to the common sense that is within him. For the admirable results obtained at La Prairie, we were chiefly indebted to the ability and exertions of Sir Patrick MacDougall, who loved Canada and its people, and thoroughly appreciated the fine manly race of both British and French origin who inhabit its many beautiful provinces. I had a very interesting time at this camp, and, taking it altogether, the experiment was a great success. It was, in fact, the first important step taken by the Canadian Government in my time to improve the military efficiency of its local forces. Every young gentleman who took part in our short period of training there returned home, not only a better soldier himself, but more capable than he was before of teaching others.

Later on, this was felt to be a still more pressing matter when a large number of drilled Irish soldiers were suddenly thrown upon the world after the disbandment of the huge armies raised by the United States for the Confederate War. A considerable proportion of these idle Irishmen then openly

declared themselves as Fenians, and indeed all seemed to be more partial to any sort of filibustering expedition than to any form of hard and continued employment in civil life. These disbanded Irish soldiers constituted an element of danger to Canada at a time when the Fenian leaders generally were specially anxious to hurt England through Canada in all possible ways. How much reason have we in England to deplore the folly which has been so remarkable a feature in the system under which we have for the last four centuries made blundering efforts to rule a much cleverer and a far more imaginative race than ourselves!

Most of us in Canada, who were thinkers on such matters, had long believed we should have trouble with these Fenians as soon as the Confederate War came to an end, and our expectations proved too true. In many of the United States towns and cities upon the Canadian frontier the so-called Irish patriots established clubs, and at many of these places the Fenians were organized on paper into battalions, with the usual proportion of officers and non-commissioned officers in each.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Attempted Fenian Invasion of Canada in 1866

DURING the winter of 1865–6 the managers of the Fenian organization in the United States had secretly formed a scheme for the invasion of Canada. With bold effrontery they pretended to have been assured of support from the Government at Washington, and this gave the movement an importance that secured it large subscriptions from the Irish Catholics in America. During the Confederate War there had been a considerable number of Irish in the northern ranks, who being now out of employment were anxious for another fighting job. I presume there were some honest leaders in the movement who believed they would really be countenanced by the United States Government, whose members it was said were hostile to England for the supposed countenance she had lent to the Confederate cause in the recent struggle. But if this were so, they must have been easily led astray by scheming revolutionists.

Our spies, and we had several in the Fenian ranks, reported that the invasion would take place in the summer of 1866. The "Fenian circles," as their local organizations were called, were said to be in great activity preparing for this event. The chief centre for their proposed invasion was the large and prosperous city of Buffalo in the State of New

York, and at the head of the Niagara River. We had long known that another of their active centres was the city of Ogdensburg, in the same State, and some sixty miles below where the St. Lawrence River leaves Lake Ontario. It is opposite the Canadian town of Prescott, and from its neighbourhood came much of our information as to the doings and intentions of this conspiracy. We accordingly kept a watch upon both those cities, whose hotels abounded in so-called colonels, captains, etc., the majority of whom were in every respect of the commonest order of Irish mankind. Of course there were traitors amongst them, who for payment supplied us with information secretly as to their doings and intentions.

Early in the spring of 1866 an officer of the Canadian militia staff crossed in plain clothes to Ogdensburg, to have what is there called "a good look around." He eventually dined at the *table d'hôte* of an inn that was largely frequented by the Fenian officers in the town. He was a well-born Irishman of exceptionally taking and genial manners who when a captain had lost his arm by a round shot as he stood beside me one day in the Crimea. He was quickly recognized to be a British officer by the "Irish patriots" present, and he saw they were anxious to be rude. Later on in the day, when all the diners had retired to the hotel drawing-room, one of the most truculent of these warriors swaggered up to my one-armed friend and said in a loud voice that was heard by all present, "You are a British officer; look well at me for I am a Fenian colonel." My friend, in the most genial tone replied, "The devil you are! I have never seen a Fenian before, and am very glad to have met one at last. I am an Irishman, so let us shake hands, my dear sir." This was said in no mocking voice,

and in such a manner that no one could take offence at it, but it so completely turned the laugh against the swaggering Fenian that many tittered, and he was shut up, said no more, and sneaked away.

We are told that a soft answer turneth away wrath, yet in a company of Irishmen a witty answer, expressed in a cordial genial tone and manner is still more likely to save the position and prevent a quarrel.

The Canadian Government became at last so seriously alarmed at these Fenian proceedings that they called out 10,000 of their militia, in March, 1866. Much drill was given, but the Ottawa Ministers, so like our own in this respect, would make no effective preparations for a campaign—that might never come off—by the purchase of those stores and munitions without which not even the smallest fighting body can be suddenly placed in the field. The Canadians are a splendid race of men and they make first-rate soldiers, but officers accustomed to command, or who were even instructed in the art of commanding, were then few. This is the weak side of all militia forces that are rarely assembled for instruction, but it is difficult to convince the officers themselves of this fact. Any one can learn in a few weeks to shout out the drill-book words of command required for any military movement. That parrot-like accomplishment is easily learnt, but not so the art of commanding men, for it is essentially an art, and so high, so peculiar an art, that many officers even in all regular armies never master it. Good pleasant manners, closely allied to firmness, a genial disposition, a real sympathy for the private soldier, and an intimate knowledge of human nature, are essential qualifications for the man who would command soldiers effectively anywhere. The art is

born in some, and comes naturally to many. In peace or in war it is a quality more necessary for the officer than any knowledge he can acquire by a study of the drill-book, essential though that knowledge be.

I have no intention of going over the back pages of history to explain the origin of the Fenian movement which eventually led to the childishly planned invasion of Canada in 1866. But as far as I am able to form an opinion from early acquaintance with the Irish people, the great factor in our Irish troubles, since the days of Queen Elizabeth, has been the difference of religion between the Roman Catholic peasantry and their Protestant landlords. The priests almost all spring from the former, and the professional men from the latter class. Of course there always were a few of the Catholic landowning gentry, who remained loyal to the British connexion, notwithstanding our cruel laws which at one time debarred them from all public employment.

It has been, I feel, this difference in religion that has kept the conquerors and the conquered so long apart in Ireland, and prevented any general amalgamation of the two races.

There had been a great emigration of Irish people into the United States since the dreadful Famine of 1848. They are a prolific race, and have largely increased in numbers there, but have not as yet supplied the American nation with presidents or great admirals or generals. In a country of universal suffrage, they, however, exercise great influence, for the Irish vote, always given solid, is a very important element in every presidential election. Hence I think the fact that a large proportion of those who made this raid upon Canada in 1866 firmly believed that the Washington Government would give them every countenance, if not material support in their proclaimed intention to rid the

North American continent of all British rule. So much was this the case, that their scheme fell to the ground as soon as they realized upon crossing into Canada that the United States Government would show them no countenance. There were also money troubles within the Fenian ranks, as most of its agents were needy adventurers. The care of and expenditure of the money collected in the United States from poor Irish servant girls and other sympathizers, soon gave rise to difficulties amongst the Fenian leaders. A large amount of bonds, made payable whenever the Fenians had established their authority in Canada, had been issued as a means for filling the coffers, and the distribution of the plunder their sale afforded led to disputes.

All through the latter half of May, 1866, we received intelligence from many quarters that the Fenians had made their preparations for the invasion of Canada, and meant very shortly to carry it out. During the last week of that month we received the news that many trains laden with Fenians had reached Buffalo. But still the Canadian authorities made no preparations to meet the coming attack. On the morning of June 1, 1866, however, all Canada was startled by the news that during the preceding night 1,500 Fenians had crossed the Niagara River from Buffalo in the State of New York, and had landed in Canada at Fort Erie, the site of a ruined and long disused British work. Fort Erie is the south-east corner of the great right-angled block of territory that constitutes the Niagara Peninsula.

Our general commanding in the province of Ontario was useless for any military purpose. A battalion of Canadian Militia had, however, been put under orders the night of May 31 to go by rail to Port Colborne the following morning and had started about daybreak for that town.

Buffalo had been cleverly chosen by the Fenian leaders as a point of concentration for their invading force. Being a large city, the arrival of from 1,500 to 2,000 unarmed men would not attract much attention, and the place itself had long swarmed with Irish sympathizers.

Although the Government of Ottawa would do nothing beforehand to prepare for such a contingency, they now acted promptly. The greater part of the Canadian Volunteer Militia in Upper Canada were at once called out, and Colonel Peacocke, of the Bedfordshire Regiment, an able and well instructed officer, was placed in command of the Niagara Peninsula.

That Peninsula is one of the most fertile, most highly cultivated and most prosperous parts of Canada. It is a rectangular block of about forty-five miles long from east to west, and of about thirty miles in depth. The northern side is bounded by Lake Ontario, the southern by Lake Erie, the eastern by the Niagara River, whilst the 80th parallel of longitude may be taken as its western boundary from Burlington Bay on the north to Stony Creek on the south. A suspension bridge over the Niagara River near the Great Falls, united Canada with the State of New York. To complete our line of inland navigation between Quebec and the Great Upper Lakes, we had many years before constructed the Welland Canal through this Niagara Peninsula. It begins at Port Colborne, on Lake Erie, about sixteen miles west of Fort Erie, and falls into Lake Ontario at Port Dalhousie, which is about eleven miles south-west of where the Niagara River also falls into that lake.

Colonel Peacocke at first established his Headquarters at St. Catherine's, a place well chosen for the purpose. Pushing on to the suspension bridge over the Niagara River at Clifton,

he found no enemy there, and being naturally anxious to hold Chippewa, a point of strategic importance, he reached that place on the night of June 1. Unfortunately he did not move the following morning, June 2, until 7 a.m., by which hour he might have been at New Germany, only six miles from Chippewa by the direct road. It was an extremely hot day, and as he had not left his knapsacks behind, the men suffered much in consequence during the march. Why he did not move by rail to Black Creek I know not, but it is easy to be wise after the event. His locally obtained guides were either fools by nature or through cowardice, for they took his column a great round by the river road to Black Creek and thence to New Germany. I shall not attempt to describe this insignificant attempt on the part of some 1,500 indifferently organized Irish Americans to invade Canada. It was throughout an extremely badly managed affair on both sides. Had our general at Toronto been a man of any energy, he would have gone at once himself to Chippewa with all available troops, and have marched thence direct upon the rabble party that had landed at Fort Erie. Had he done so, he might easily have killed a large number of those poor misguided Irishmen who had been induced to take part in this idiotic attempt at invasion. So idiotic was it as a military enterprise that I have always thought it must have been undertaken in order to fill the pockets of the patriot leaders.

A Militia colonel and a captain of the Royal Engineers, neither being either wise or experienced soldiers, had been sent to Port Colborne, the southern entrance to the Welland Canal, at the same time that Colonel Peacocke had been sent to Chippewa. Ordered to proceed thence in a tug, and with some Militia as a guard on board, for the purpose of recon-

noitring Fort Erie and of patrolling the Niagara River as far north as Navy Island, they took it upon themselves to land their men at Fort Erie instead. There they were attacked by the Fenians and their detachment was mostly either killed, wounded or captured. The Militia colonel in command escaped in borrowed civilian's clothes; having shaved his beard and whiskers he temporarily found refuge in a rick of hay. Another colonel of Militia when on the march in command of his battalion, came suddenly upon the enemy at a cross roads called Ridgeway. Thus surprised, he and his battalion, after some loss on both sides, were soon in full retreat at no slow pace. In the formation he had advanced in, he was bound to be surprised, and when some nervous men, upon seeing a few Fenian officers on horseback in the distance, cried out in panic, "Cavalry," the wildest confusion ensued. Had the Fenians been worth anything as soldiers few of their opponents would have supped that night in their own bivouac. It was a short skirmish between two small parties of undisciplined, untrained men, and it was, I should imagine, a toss up which side disbanded first. Speaking from my own experience of the Canadian Militia I have every reason to think most highly of, and to believe thoroughly in them when they are properly handled. Had they been so handled in their skirmishes during this Fenian raid, they would, I feel sure, have bagged every Irish American who had then landed at Fort Erie. There would have been no stampede that day on the Ridge Road had the Militia engaged been commanded by a Militia officer like Colonel George Denison, of the Canadian Bodyguard.

As soon as the news of this Fenian raid reached Montreal, General Sir John Michael, then commanding the forces in

Canada, sent me off in hot haste to the seat of this trouble. Major-General Napier, who commanded in the province of Ontario, was not a shining light, and I was told to "coach" him and prevent him from doing anything very foolish. I knew General Napier personally very well, and upon reaching Toronto the following morning he at once adopted all the measures I recommended. Indeed, he seemed delighted to have someone by him whose advice he could follow. In private life a charming man, he was quite useless at all times as a commander. And yet he was a fair specimen of the general then usually selected for military commands. Before my arrival he had ordered a Battery of Field Artillery, and what odds and ends could be scraped together in Toronto and its neighbourhood, to leave that evening for the Niagara frontier under my esteemed Crimean friend, Colonel, now General R. W. Lowry, C.B., then commanding the 1st Battalion of the North Lancashire Regiment. A gallant Irishman, belonging to an old and distinguished family of fighting men, it was now his business to snuff out the silly efforts made by an Irish-American party to disturb our rule in Canada. His battalion had already gone to the front, where he was to be joined by detachments of the Bedfordshire Regiment and of the Royal Rifles. Upon reaching Clifton at 8 p.m. that evening by rail, the railway authorities declined to send us any further until daylight the following morning, as they thought the bridges and culverts on the line had probably been destroyed. At midnight we were joined by a battalion of volunteers.

We started from Clifton by rail the following morning, June 3, 1866, at 3.30 a.m., for Black Creek, on the Niagara River, a distance of only ten miles. We only travelled at

about four or five miles an hour, so as to be able to pull up very quickly should the line be cut or otherwise obstructed. We were detained there a couple of hours until the railway authorities had examined the line ahead, and did not get away from it until 7 a.m., when we made for Frenchman's Creek, six miles further on. We detrained at Frenchman's Creek, as Colonel Lowry intended to march thence upon Fort Erie, which was close by, and engage our Fenian enemy should he be there still. I soon had my horse out of its box and rode forward to reconnoitre towards Fort Erie. Upon reaching it, I was astonished to see a United States gunboat anchored in midstream with a huge barge astern of her that was crowded with Fenians, as we afterwards ascertained to the number of about six or seven hundred. They had evidently bivouacked on the river's bank before embarking in the barge, for all around the ground was filthy and their surgeons had evidently been at work patching up some of their wounded. The first object that attracted my attention was a drunken Irishwoman, who, apparently as a defiance to me, the English officer before her, flourished over her head an amputated leg, which she had grasped round the ankle, crying out to me as she did so, "God save ould Ireland." The position was disgusting, but yet as comical as that of the drunken old lady, who, when being taken to the Police Office in Dublin, on March 17, kept howling out, "Oh! blessed and holy St. Patrick, see what I'm suffering for you this night"!

At Fort Erie we found a few Fenian wounded and one of their dead, also some wounded Canadian Volunteers. In the afternoon Colonel Lowry and I went on board the U.S. gunboat, *Michigan*, which had the barge-full of Fenians fastened on astern. There we found General Barry, of the

United States Army, who commanded at Buffalo. He and the naval officer commanding the gunboat were both well bred gentlemen and received us kindly. So ended this fiasco of a Fenian invasion. Of course the United States Government could have prevented it from ever taking place. But in a country whose supreme ruler and all his subordinate governors are elected by the people every few years, it is not always practically possible for them to adopt strong measures for the suppression of even such a nuisance as a Fenian raid. It was our policy throughout this business carefully to avoid taking any steps which the Fenians could preach up in their newspapers as a violation of American territory or as an injury done by us to some law-abiding citizen of the great Republic.

Late in the summer of this year, 1866, the Canadian Government deemed it advisable to form a camp in the Niagara Peninsula. The Fenians in the United States still continued to talk loudly of invading Ontario, and if they could effect no permanent lodgment there, they hoped at least to destroy the Welland Canal. Even supposing no such invasion had to be guarded against, it was felt that a short period in camp would afford the Ontario Militia an opportunity of learning the practical duties of soldiers in the field to an extent they could not hope for at their own homes. Thorold, a village on the Welland Canal was selected as the site for this camp, and I was selected to be its Commandant. It was a well chosen position on account of its railroad facilities. A battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment and a Field Battery of Royal Artillery were to be at Thorold as long as the Camp remained there, for the purpose of affording instruction to the Militia Force employed. The Militia were to come in batches of four or five battalions at a time for a period of ten

days' instruction. It was hoped in this way, at a small expense and without interfering seriously with the usual occupations of the men, to afford much useful and practical instruction to all ranks. I found them delightful men to deal with; all were most anxious to learn, and they were apt scholars.

The Governor-General's bodyguard, under Colonel George Denison, was placed under my orders as long as the camp lasted, to watch the Niagara frontier from Chippewa to Fort Erie and westward from the latter point as far as Ridgeway. Between these two extreme points was about thirty-two miles, a long distance to be well and closely watched day and night by a troop of three officers and fifty-five mounted men. But what could be done with such a handful of men was well done by them and by their excellent outpost commander.

This camp attracted large numbers of sightseers from both Canada and the United States. The Fenians across the border still continued to talk loudly of annexing Canada, and letters appeared in the United States newspapers in which Irish conspirators intimated their intention to try once more an invasion of the Niagara Peninsula and the destruction of the Welland Canal. A considerable number of Ontario Militia battalions attended this camp, and I had a renewed opportunity of being brought into close relationship with many of the best of the Canadian officers at that period. All stout, loyal-hearted men, to be depended upon in any hour of national trouble, and all anxious to learn a soldier's trade; no finer material for an army could be found in any country, and they were always the nicest and the best of friends and comrades. The district we were encamped in is rich in apple and peach orchards. These are not only

beautiful, but very valuable also from the great quantity of excellent fruit they produce. I had a very happy time there, and was visited by many old friends and made several new ones.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The Red River Expedition of 1870

THE year 1870 stands out as a striking epoch in the history of modern Europe. During its early months two great military nations were eagerly engaged in making ready for a struggle that was to end in once more driving the representative of the Bonaparte family from the throne of France. The whole civilized world was profoundly anxious at the moment, for no nation could foretell the limits within which it might be possible to restrict military operations. All the great continental powers were armed to the teeth, and in such a condition of affairs it was difficult to foresee what any day might bring forth, or what might be the unpleasant upheavals which the general whirligig of fortune might have in store for mankind.

Whilst all was thus in ferment upon the Continent of Europe, a small military expedition of an unusual character was being organized in Canada on the western shores of Lake Superior. Its destination was Fort Garry, the chief post of the Hudson Bay Company in the great province now known as Winnipeg, but then generally spoken of as Prince Rupert's Land. It had been named after the gallant nephew of Charles I, who had made himself famous by land and sea in doing battle for the Crown more than two centuries before.

To describe the circumstances that rendered this expedition necessary would lead me far beyond this story of my

own doings into a discussion on Canadian politics. Suffice it to say, that the Hudson Bay Company claimed the exclusive right to govern all the British territories whose waters drained into the seas from which their trading title had its origin. These territories were little known, and the Company had always seemed anxious to avoid discussing their geographical boundaries. They desired to maintain the exclusive right to trade with all the Indians who inhabited that part of North America, and they never encouraged travellers or explorers in the undefined provinces which they claimed as their chartered and legal property. It would indeed have been commercially suicidal on the part of that Company to have helped forward in any way the colonization of their territory, as, amongst other reasons, the spread of civilization meant the ultimate extinction of the fur-bearing animals that supply the staple article which the Indians barter with them.

When our North American Colonies were brought together to form the present Dominion of Canada, their united importance was quickly recognized. The Dominion Government was anxious to put an end to this ill-defined and disputed claim to ownership on the part of the Hudson Bay Company. Upon all sides it was realized that the days for such monopolies were past, and after lengthened negotiations it was decided that Canada should pay the Company £300,000 for all its supposed sovereign rights over the territory in question.

But this arrangement, which would open the country to colonization, did not find favour with the clerical party in Canada. Priests from the French-speaking province of Quebec, and Jesuit missionaries from France, had been long established in the western prairies of the Hudson Bay

Company. They had acquired influence and power amongst the Indians, of whom many had joined a religious community whose rites, mysteries, ornaments and striking ceremonies appealed to their simple yet superstitious minds.

The English and the Scotch Churches had also representatives there, but their cold formalities and reasoned notions of God did not take root in the uneducated Indian's heart. The white men living in this north-western region were almost equally divided between the Protestant and the Catholic Churches. The former, however, were divided into many phases of Church government, and seldom, if ever, worked together. A large proportion of the Company's servants were Scotch Presbyterians, and a first-rate body of men they were. On the other hand, the French-speaking inhabitants were all of one religion, and ruled over by a clever, cunning, unscrupulous bishop. He was strongly opposed to this transfer of the Hudson Bay Company's sovereign rights to the Dominion of Canada. The Company had never taken any side in questions of religion, but, finding this wily French bishop a power in the land, they had used him to keep the country quiet and free from intruders. There were consequently two forces, both—though with different objects—working to keep this Red River Company closed to immigration, the Hudson Bay Company and the French Canadian priesthood. The small colony of Scotchmen who had been settled there by Lord Selkirk in 1812 had already been practically absorbed into the service of the Hudson Bay Company, only a few families remaining permanently established upon the fertile lands along the banks of the Red River. Of these two forces the first object of the former was a good annual dividend: of the latter, the permanence of their own position as

spiritual and secular leaders, and the strict reservation of the Red River country for settlers coming from Lower Canada only. They dreamt of building up in that far off north-western land another French province where the language, laws, and, above all things, the religion of Quebec might be perpetuated. It was gall and wormwood to all who had inherited French names to see Canada, a country originally civilized by France, becoming year by year more and more English in its ways, thoughts and ambitions. All French Canadians saw with envy and dread the steadily increasing power and position of western Canada—now the great province of Ontario. But if they could create a new French-speaking country westward of the great lakes, they believed it would, in the end, become a counterpoise to the growing preponderance of British Ontario. This feeling had given birth to the strong tie then existing between the French-Canadian wire-pullers at Ottawa and the French-Canadian priests who had migrated to the Red River Settlement. All this plot, however, fell to pieces, like a castle of cards, the day I hoisted the Union Jack over Fort Garry.

But the English in Ontario were not blind to these French-Canadian aims. A few of them had already made homes for themselves in that prairie country, and by degrees had formed themselves into a British-Canadian party there. Those two opposing sections were respectively supported by the Press of Ontario and of Quebec, and by members of Parliament who represented constituencies in those two provinces, whilst the Roman priesthood did all in their power to give a religious aspect to the dispute.

The Government of Ottawa has always a difficult card to play between those two factions. Pressure was, however, put upon the Prime Minister by the people of Ontario, and

the result was the despatch to the Red River district of some surveyors with orders to divide the still unallotted lands into townships with a view to emigration. The off-hand manners of these English-speaking surveyors did not find favour with the French Canadians in that distant settlement. At work throughout all the autumn of 1869, these surveyors not only offended but frightened the French-speaking occupants by running chain-lines across their farms without being able to explain to them, in the only tongue they spoke, their reasons for doing so. The ignorant French "habitant" very naturally jumped to the conclusion that there was some plot on foot to rob him of the land he occupied and had partially cultivated, but for which he could show no written title.

In every community there is usually a restless and more or less idle party, and in 1869 the Red River Settlement was no exception to this rule. Encouraged by the Catholic priesthood of the locality, these discontented settlers went amongst the French-speaking farmers, and persuaded them that the surveyors had come to apportion their lands into lots for English-speaking emigrants from Ontario. They even openly preached resistance to these surveyors in defence of their rights, their homes, and their religion.

The foremost man amongst these noisy idlers was Louis Riel, a pure French Canadian, though generally referred to as a half-breed. He had, however, many half-breed relations, and wished for political purposes to be considered one himself. He was naturally clever, had been educated in a Canadian Roman Catholic school, and at one time seems to have had thoughts of becoming a priest. This calling did not, however, accord with the aims of so restless a disposition. Eventually he became a clerk in a United States shop, from which, after a few years' work, he was dismissed

for dishonesty. Whilst in the United States he learnt to speak English intelligibly. There also he conceived the idea, that in the ignorant community of Red River half-breeds his superior ability and education ought to secure him an easy mode of livelihood. In all countries the occupation of demagogue has much to tempt the idle fellow of sharp wits. Those who knew him best told me that physically he was by no means brave; his actions, however, proved he was a man of determination. He spoke well and fluently, and thus obtained considerable influence amongst the numerous and ignorant half-breeds in his far distant native country.

He soon gathered round him a small party of idle fellows like himself, but their difficulty was to support themselves. None of them had any money, and until they took possession of Fort Garry and the Hudson Bay Company stores it contained, they were so badly off that Riel had to sell the only cow possessed by his mother. She, poor woman, had lived always in abject poverty, and her son had not been able to help her much.

To cause their importance to be generally recognized on the Red River, Riel and his followers found it necessary to commit some overt act of rebellion. They began in October, 1869, by warning a surveying party to quit the district where they were at work. Meetings of the French Canadian settlers were at once called by these fomenters of rebellion, at which Riel and his friends made inflammatory speeches and called upon the people to resist. "Why and by what right did the Hudson Bay Company sell them and their lands to the Canadian Government for £300,000? Why should not that money, or at least a large portion of it, go to them, the owners of the farms, instead?" The whole district was aflame, and the priests who had previously kept in the back-

ground, now openly preached from their altars resistance to the Canadian Government.

A little judicious management on the part of the Ottawa Ministry might at first have settled matters amicably and have thwarted the clerical party, who from the beginning had fomented this rebellion. An authoritative and official statement that all rights of property would be absolutely respected: that all *bonâ fide* occupiers of land should retain it rent-free, and be given a legal title to it; that all forms of religion would be respected, and all classes allowed to worship God as they pleased, would have been ample for the purpose.

But the Canadian Cabinet was then unfortunate, for the only far-seeing statesman in it, the Prime Minister, Sir John R. Macdonald, was seriously ill. Hence the management of this Red River Rebellion devolved upon Sir George Cartier, the leader of the Quebec Conservative party. I knew both these men, and I was well aware of how difficult was the game they had to play. The latter was a clever and thoroughly honest French Canadian of engaging manners, and a general favourite in all classes of society. In his youth he had himself trifled with rebellion, but had since then become a most loyal subject. He had great influence amongst his own people, whom he thoroughly understood. But, to be their leader, he had to bow down before their bigoted and ignorant priesthood, for whom in his heart he had little love and no respect. He dared not, however, run counter to their narrow, clerical views and aspirations, so his task was by no means an easy one, even for so practised a politician. A poor man, he was himself above suspicion in all money matters, but to maintain his position as a leader he had at times to resort to gross jobbery.

The Bill he brought into the Ottawa Parliament practically conceded to the French Canadian settlers on the Red River all they could have reasonably wished for. It passed with but little opposition, though condemned as an outrageous concession to this half-breed rebellion by all the English newspapers of Ontario. Not many years before, when the Hudson Bay Company officials in the Red River territory had given offence by some action taken to enforce the law, four men had banded together and proclaimed a republic. One was proclaimed president, and two of the others were elected his ministers. For some cause unknown to me, the fourth had become objectionable to his three friends, who, wishing to get rid of him, tried and condemned him to death as a "conspirator." But he constituted in his own person the whole of the population—not in office—who recognized the three others as the rulers of their state. There was consequently no one belonging to it who could carry out the sentence, and the Republic, thus unable to enforce its decrees, fell to pieces. Riel seemed to think it necessary that he too should in like manner adopt some vigorous policy that would impress the community over which he had proclaimed himself president with a due sense of his power and of his determination to exert it against everyone who might dare to question it. He accordingly imprisoned and put in irons all the Ontario surveying party, selecting one of them, a Mr. Scott, for trial, who had made himself personally objectionable by denouncing him and his gang as rebels against the Queen's authority. A frivolous charge of breach of parole—which was unfounded—was brought against him, and he was arraigned before a mock Court-Martial of half-breeds. The proceedings were carried on in French, which Mr. Scott could not speak. He was

condemned to be shot, and in a few hours afterwards the sentence was carried out by some drunken half-breeds, who, I was told, had been addressed by a French-speaking priest on the spot and assured they were about to perform a righteous act.

The report of the rifles by which this murder was perpetrated was the death knell of the ridiculous little republic the French party had set up at Fort Garry. Throughout the whole of Canada, wherever the English language was spoken, there arose a cry of execration and a demand for the execution of the murderers.

The Ottawa Government had selected a Mr. William McDougall from amongst their own number to be the Governor of their newly-acquired Province on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. The choice was not a happy one, and was apparently made solely in the interests of party. He was a cold-blooded man, destitute of geniality and of sympathy in dealing with men.

He started for Fort Garry by the United States route which takes the traveller into British territory at the little village of Pembina, close to the 49th degree of north latitude. There he was stopped by a party of half-breeds sent by Riel to warn him not to enter the Red River territory, over which he, Riel, declared himself to be president. Mr. McDougall consequently never reached his destination nor attempted to assume the duties of the office to which he had been appointed.

The Ottawa Government was unable to withstand the loud, the angry demands for the despatch of a military expedition to suppress the rebellion in the Red River Settlement. The English-speaking people of Canada were so determined to have it put down, that had the Government

refused to comply, the men of Ontario would have taken the matter into their own hands and have settled it themselves. It was consequently decided to send a Brigade of troops to Fort Garry through Canadian territory as soon as the navigation on the Upper Lakes opened and the ice had disappeared from those northern regions. The Home Government agreed to co-operate by furnishing one battalion and some Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer detachments, the remaining two battalions to be provided from the excellent militia of Canada, one from Ontario, the other from the province of Quebec.

I was at the time Quartermaster-General in Canada, and was selected for the command of this expedition. I had come to know and highly value the Canadian militia, having had the advantage upon several occasions of commanding their camps of exercise. I was fully aware of the splendid material of which that force was constituted. The men are extremely handy and self-reliant; in fact, when well trained, they cannot be beaten as fighting soldiers. Their officers, accustomed in civil life to think for themselves, their minds not dwarfed or trammelled by strict rules and regulations, were men after my own heart, and for the work before us, they were certainly the best possible material. In parenthesis may I say, that if wisdom ruled our councils upon military matters—it does so but seldom—we should employ a Canadian division under their own officers in every serious war we undertake. Fortunate indeed will be the Commander-in-Chief who should have such a military force at his disposal in any war into which England may be forced.

The first Battalion of the Royal Rifles, then in Canada, was to be the Imperial quota. It was commanded by an

excellent soldier in every sense, Colonel Feilden, and was in all respects one of the best battalions in our army. A battalion of Ontario Militia under Colonel Jarvis, and one of Quebec Militia under Colonel Cassault, constituted the brigade, and I do not believe that any better or more workmanlike force ever took the field.

I carried four six-pounder rifle steel guns with me. Two of them I intended for the defence of my base on Thunder Bay, where I meant to leave a small garrison to protect the stores I should collect there. There had been some "tall talk" in the press at the time about the Fenians attacking my base as soon as the expeditionary force had started for Fort Garry. I never believed in the Fenians: they talked and wrote too much of their "intentions" to be taken seriously. Still, however, I thought some such precautions were necessary, and felt they would not lose in importance at the hands of those who would comment upon them in the press. These newspaper reports would make the cautious creatures who sailed under the rebel Irish flag think twice before they embarked in any such undertaking.

The remaining two of these guns I handed over to my small detachment of Royal Artillery, under the command of Lieutenant J. Alleyne, whom I had selected as the best artillery officer then in Canada. He was a good yachtsman and thoroughly understood all boat-work. Indeed he was, I may say, all round, one of the best men I have ever known in the Army. Had he lived he must have risen to the highest position.

Lieut.-General the Hon. James Lindsay—to whom I have referred in a previous chapter—was then commanding the troops in Canada. He was a wise man of the world and a soldier in every sense, highly esteemed by all ranks who had

the advantage of knowing him well. He helped me in all possible ways when I was fitting out the expedition, and smoothed the way for me with the Canadian Government authorities, not always then the easiest of people to deal with.

The total distance to be traversed between Port Arthur and Fort Garry was over 600 miles, and the range of hills that we had to cross, and which divided the waters which drained into Hudson Bay from those that reached the sea by the St. Lawrence river, was about 800 feet in height. Everything depended upon how the force to be employed was organized and equipped before starting. After we had once embarked in our boats on Shebandowan Lake, we should be cut off absolutely from all outside help and should have to trust entirely to our own exertions and pluck. On the way to Fort Garry we could not receive reinforcements, and, worse still, could obtain no provisions, clothing, ammunition, axes or other tools. Everything we required had therefore to be taken with us in our boats, and their carrying capacity was necessarily very limited. All implements for use during the expedition had to be both strong and light. At the numerous rocky and difficult portages to be traversed, our boats would be exposed to extremely rough usage, for which they would have to be well built of good tough material. But if made extra heavy for this purpose, their great weight would add seriously to the men's labour in dragging them over the steep and rugged heights to be encountered between Lakes Superior and Winnipeg. Almost all these boats were about thirty feet long, with a proportionate beam; all had keels, and were about half and half, carvel and clinker built. The crew of each consisted of eight or nine soldiers and two or three Indians or other

civilians who were selected as being, "voyageurs," or good men on timber rafts, or at river work generally. Each boat carried sixty days' provisions for all on board of it, in the shape of salt pork, beans, preserved potatoes, flour, biscuit, salt, tea and sugar. No spirits of any sort were provided for the men, and the officers were forbidden to take any wine for their own use. It was a strictly teetotal undertaking. The necessary entrenching tools, ammunition, tents, water-proof sheets, cooking pots, blankets, etc., etc., left but little empty space in the boats, which were loaded down as far as they could be with due regard to safety. The captain of each company was responsible for all these stores, and to him were given some well-selected boat-builders' tools, a number of tin plates, and plenty of white lead for patching up holes or injuries done to the boats. All such minutiæ had to be well thought out and every calculable contingency provided for.

It was essential to study the "job" as a whole, and to calculate out everything with the greatest nicety. The experience I had had in canoe-work and in the woods during my seven or eight years' service in Canada, helped me greatly, and my numerous friends in the Dominion gave me the best possible advice. The Public Works helped me in every way: one of its officers, Mr. Dawson, knew the country I was about to pass through perfectly well. Indeed, he had carefully studied the route the expedition took, and had laid out the road which connected Thunder Bay with Shebandowan Lake.

All the officers with the expeditionary force soon became expert in making portages and in mending their boats, no one more so than my very able friend and valued comrade Redvers Buller. It was here I first made his acquaintance, and I

am proud to feel that we have been firm friends ever since. He was a first-rate axeman, and I think he was the only man with us of any rank who could carry a 100-pound barrel of pork over a portage on his back. He could mend a boat and have her back in the water with her crew and all her stores on board whilst many, under similar circumstances, would have been still making up their minds what to do. Full of resource, and personally absolutely fearless, those serving under him always trusted him fully. He afterwards served as my Chief of the Staff in the expedition sent too late to try and relieve the hero and martyr, General Charles Gordon, in Khartoum, and no man ever deserved better of his country than he did upon that occasion.

We took nets, hoping to catch fish on the way, as the rivers and lakes to be crossed were said to be well stocked, but we never had time to use them: "Push on, push on," was our war cry, and it was in every man's mouth from first to last. Our time was limited, for the Royal Rifles had to get back to Canada before the frost set in. Besides, most of us felt we had to settle accounts quickly with Riel, who had murdered the Englishman, Mr. Scott. Had we caught him he would have had no mercy.

Upon the subject of stores one little fact may amuse my reader. At that time the pattern of our field axe was very bad. It was absolutely useless for all "tree-felling" purposes, and was so ancient in type that it might have come down to us from Saxon times. I remember how the Canadian lumbermen laughed when shown one of these prehistoric implements. I would have none of them, and purchased serviceable American axes of the double-wedge pattern instead. Since that time, this pattern has been adopted for our army generally. I must add that almost

all our tools and field implements were then of an inferior quality. When we tried to cut brushwood and small bushes with the regulation billhook we made little impression upon them, but they made their mark upon the billhook, whose edge, under even that easy trial, soon assumed the appearance of a dissipated saw.

This was my first independent command, so I was on my mettle, and felt that if I possessed any genius for such practical work, the time had at last arrived for me to show it. I made all the necessary calculations myself, after the most careful study of the route to be taken, of the time it would take to reach Fort Garry and to settle matters there when I had reached it. I was to leave the two battalions of Canadian militia at that place, so the return journey would be a smaller operation and the pace would consequently be much quicker. The Regular Troops upon their return journey would find every portage already cleared, and fit for immediate use.

I calculated it would take about forty days to make the journey in boats from Lake Shebandowan to Fort Garry by the route I intended to follow. The three battalions, etc., should therefore reach that place with enough provisions in hand for the battalion of the Royal Rifles and of the detachments of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers during their return journey to Thunder Bay. The margin for mishaps was, I considered, sufficient, but not in any way extravagant. It was a matter of serious consequence that the troops returning to Canada should get over the range of mountains which formed the watershed between Lakes Superior and Winnipeg before the first severe frost had set in. Ice, even a quarter of an inch thick, upon any of the many lakes to be traversed would have cut through

the thin sides of my boats. Yet I dared not make them thicker, as every extra pound added to their weight, and consequently to the work of hauling them over the numerous portages to be crossed. Many of these portages were long, and a still greater number were very steep. But for the return journey the boats would be much lighter, and consequently the rate of progress would be quicker.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The Lakes, Rivers and Wilderness to be traversed, 1870

THE country we were about to pass through was then only known to those employed by the Hudson Bay Company. Their chief posts in it were at Fort William, where the Kaministiguia River falls into Thunder Bay, at Fort Francis—about half way by water to Fort Garry—and at Rat Portage, where the Winnipeg River leaves the north end of the Lake of the Woods. As a general rule the Company sent its annual supply of stores, for that district, by ship to Hudson's Bay, whence they were carried by boat up the St. John's River to Lake Winnipeg.

My orders were to proceed to Thunder Bay, on the western shores of Lake Superior, and to make my way thence in boats to the Red River Settlement. Starting from Toronto, the beautiful capital of the magnificent province of Ontario, our route was first north by rail for ninety-four miles to Collingwood, the railway terminus on Georgian Bay. From that port, steamers conveyed us across Lake Huron and through the St. Mary River into Lake Superior and over it to Thunder Bay, a total distance of 534 miles. Thence to Fort Garry was 660 miles. The first bit of that distance was along a partly made road of forty-eight miles to Lake Shebandowan, from which lake the remainder of the journey was to be by water.

The Lake Superior basin sends its waters eastward over Niagara down the valley of the St. Lawrence into the sea below Quebec, whilst the Lake Winnipeg basin is drained by the St. John's River that runs northward into Hudson's Bay. A range of rugged and, in 1870, little explored mountains runs fairly parallel with the northern shores of Lake Superior, and circling round its western limits restricts the basin very much on that side. As it bends southwards, round Thunder Bay, at a mean distance from it of about eighty miles, this range diminishes in height and importance. Still, however, the lowest pass over it in that region is about 839 feet above the lake, and through that pass I was to take my Expeditionary Force.

During the two preceding years the Canadian Government had made feeble and intermittent efforts to open out a route from Thunder Bay to Fort Garry. Working parties had been at times fitfully engaged in the construction of a road from that bay to the Shebandowan Lake. That beautiful sheet of water—about twenty miles in length and a few miles in width—is over 800 feet above the level of Lake Superior. Thence by lake and rivers to the Lake of the Woods, the distance was about 310 miles, there being about seventeen portages to be made and crossed along it. I may explain that a "portage" means a break in the chain of water communication over which all canoes and boats have to be hauled or carried, as I shall describe further on, and all food, stores, etc., transported by the soldiers on their backs. Some of the portages we crossed were over a mile in length.

The Lake of the Woods was of considerable length, and the passage over it was sure to be very tedious, as we had no useful maps of that district. Owing to the intricate maze formed by its seeming infinity of islands, and of promontories

resembling islands, many a boat's crew, after hours of rowing, would often find themselves in some *cul de sac*. Much time would thus be lost and the temper of all employed would certainly be severely tried.

The Winnipeg River had a bad reputation amongst voyageurs as very dangerous and difficult. There were at least thirty portages on it, several of which were terrifying to look at. I have seen many rivers in many countries, but for the exquisite beauty of foaming, raging water in great volume amidst such extremely wild and beautiful scenery as it passes through for about 150 miles, I know of nothing to equal it. The Chippewahs, to whom it may be said the district between Lake Superior and the prairie belongs, have been for the last century a peaceful, lazy and uninteresting race. They keep to the forests along the rivers and lakes, and are seldom to be seen in the prairie country. Good men in canoes, they show to the best advantage on difficult rivers. They live largely on fish, but obtain a small amount of flour at the Hudson Bay posts in exchange for mink and other skins. In summer they move to where the blueberry abounds, with which they cram themselves for a month, and upon many islands in the Lake of the Woods I found small patches where they had planted potatoes. I was told they also plant a little Indian corn.

I have thus endeavoured to convey briefly to my reader a rough outline of the route we were to follow and of the obstacles to be faced by all ranks destined to take part in this expedition, for all alike had to do much manual work. I have avoided unnecessary detail as far as is consistent with affording some general information as to the difficulties of the route, giving a fair idea of the preparations made beforehand to meet and

overcome them. When I now recall the events connected with this undertaking, and how much I had to demand from all ranks in the force employed in order to accomplish the task we had confided to us, I am not surprised that the home Government paused and rather shied at the proposal that any Imperial troops should take part in it. Truly it was a peculiar undertaking, and any serious mistake on the part of the Commander during its progress might, and probably would, have entailed disaster.

Lake Superior is usually sufficiently clear of ice for navigation purposes by the second week of May, and as part of the force intended for Fort Garry was to return to Canada by the same route, it was essential that the expedition should start at the earliest possible date. Steamers from Collingwood can only reach Lake Superior by the St. Mary River, the dividing boundary throughout its whole length of fifty miles, between Canada and the United States. There is a bad rapid, unnavigable by steamers, on this river, known as "The Sault St. Mary." To avoid it the Americans had constructed a canal three miles in length, on their side of the river, so that all our steamers bound for Lake Superior would have to pass for that distance through United States territory, as we had then no canal on our side of the river.

The Fenians thought they saw in this Red River Expedition an opportunity of stirring up enmity between England and the United States. Our troops would have to pass close to the ill-defined frontier that divides our territory from that of the States, and it might perhaps be possible to raise the cry that we had violated our neighbour's boundaries.

The Irish question has always been a thorn in the flesh of every President and Government at Washington. But the Irish vote was, and I fear must long be, a matter of great

importance to the wirepullers of both the political parties in the States. At the time I write of, the leaders of neither party dared offend so powerful an organization, that voted " solid " according to the orders of their chiefs.

These Fenian projects met with great sympathy from the press of the Western States, which urged the desirability of hindering in every possible way the arrival of our troops at Fort Garry. These facts were well known to the Governor-General of Canada and were communicated to me. It was therefore thought advisable to send an ordinary steamer, with merchandize only on board, through the Sault St. Mary Canal into Lake Superior as soon as the ice had sufficiently cleared off to admit of this being done. Even one steamer on that lake would render us fairly independent of the canal should the United States Government positively forbid its use to us.

When our merchant steamer appeared at the lower end of the canal, the officials on the spot were taken by surprise, and having received no orders from their Government on the subject, allowed her to pass through. Once through it, and its length is only three miles, the steamer was in British waters, as the St. Mary River is there the common property of both nations. It was deemed advisable—in case of accidents —to have at least two steamers on Lake Superior for the use of our expeditionary force. But the Canadian steamer that next sought to pass through this canal was refused permission, although she had no war material of any kind on board. We fortunately found an American steamer with an American captain who hired himself and his vessel to us for work upon Lake Superior for that season. Entirely of his own accord he made an affidavit before the United States authorities, that she had not been hired by the British, and

that he had nothing whatever to do with the Red River Expedition. By this hard swearing he got safely through into Lake Superior. We were thus provided with two steamers for use on its waters.

We had never contemplated sending troops through this canal. Our intention was to land them below the "Sault," on our side of the St. Mary River, and to march them three miles to the head of the canal to re-embark in the same steamer, which we hoped would be allowed to go through the canal provided it had no inculpatory war material on board. We had allowed the United States Government to send vessels with war material on board, and even in one instance had granted permission to one of their gun-boats to pass through our St. Lawrence River canals during the progress of their Confederate War. We had consequently hoped the Washington Government would show us equal consideration in the matter of this St. Mary River canal, as long as we did not send armed men through their territory. But we reckoned without our host, and at first the answer we received was an official notification that no other British ships, whatever might be their cargo, would be allowed, until further orders, to pass through this canal.

When these matters were reported to Lord Lisgar, then our Governor-General in Canada, he sent a formal protest to the United States Government at Washington on the subject, which resulted in the canal being thrown open to all our ships not carrying munitions of war. But all these proceedings on the part of the American authorities delayed us. Short of going to war they could not have stopped the expedition, do what they might, so the line they took was very foolish. They gained nothing by it, whilst they annoyed us much to no useful purpose.

PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING

In Thunder Bay we steered for a small clearance that had been made by the Canadian Public Works Department as the starting point for the road to Shebandowan. There I landed and formed a camp for my brigade. I named the place "Prince Arthur's Landing," after the Duke of Connaught, who as Prince Arthur had recently spent a winter with his regiment in Montreal.

A few shanties had been erected before our arrival as storehouses, but it was an ugly looking spot, for everything, including the ground and the trees, had recently been burnt black by a great forest fire. The conflagration had spread inland, destroying bridges, culverts, shanties, and every blade of grass along the new road. Nothing remained anywhere but tall blackened gaunt trunks of trees and smoke-disfigured rocks. I never looked upon a drearier or less inviting prospect in any of my many wanderings.

I landed on May 25, 1870, and pitched my tent on the ground overlooking the bay. The lake beyond it is so large, that it may well be called an inland fresh-water sea. The shores, rich in minerals, are in many parts very beautiful, though still but little known to English tourists. Our camps were laid out with as great regularity as the broken nature of the ground would admit. Never have men worked harder than those who landed with me there. The stores, food, ammunition, etc., etc., had to be landed and carried to the places prepared for their reception; paths had to be made, a strong redoubt to be constructed for the defence of the reserve of food, etc., etc., I meant to leave there; large parties were required daily along the Shebandowan road, which was still a very poor highway for my heavily laden wagons. Before leaving Montreal, I had been assured by the Canadian Government that this road would

be open for traffic by the end of May, but not more than thirty of the forty-eight miles to which it extended had been completed by that date, and for many miles the forest was still uncut along the route selected.

This threw so much heavy and unexpected work upon my soldiers that I thought it advisable to have the Kaministiguia River explored, as it ran out of Lake Shebandowan into Lake Superior. We had been told that its rapids and its falls were of so terrible a nature that it was absolutely hopeless to think of navigating it in any way. One fall was known to be over 120 feet in height. I sent a company of the Royal Rifles to explore it, whose captain was one of the very hardiest campaigners I ever knew. I went there to examine it and found myself in Hiawatha's romantically beautiful country. The scenery was very grand and striking, but the river was certainly no first class highway. However it was a help, and relieved the great pressure upon the still partly unfinished road to Shebandowan.

I shall not attempt to enter into any particulars of the many appliances we used for carrying our impedimenta over the portages, but it was wonderful how quickly the little Londoners of the Royal Rifles became good men in the boats and on the portages also. By the time they had made the trip to Fort Garry and back to Lake Superior, both officers and men of that corps had become good, many of them expert axemen, and all more or less skilled in the craft of the voyageur. All ranks in the two Canadian battalions became proficient in the work more quickly, but indeed, where every man worked as if the success of the expedition depended solely upon his individual exertion and skill, it is difficult and it would be invidious, to draw any comparison in this respect between the three battalions employed.

I had to send forward Companies to complete the road to Shebandowan. The men worked at it through the month of June and half of July as if the Old Gentleman himself were driving them forward; all felt that the sooner it was finished the sooner would they be able to make their final start for the Red River. Many of us in youth have in our ignorance ridiculed Livy's story of how Hannibal split the rocks which hindered the passage of his army by first lighting great fires on and around them, and when they had been thus made extremely hot sousing them suddenly with cold wine. I found that a similar process was commonly employed by roadmaking parties in the wild parts of Canada, and that this method was most efficacious. There was always ample material at hand in the way of firewood, and water was found to answer the purpose quite as effectually as wine. I am sure that none of my men would have wasted good liquor in the construction of roads, as the great Carthaginian is said to have done when crossing the Alps! A considerable amount of "corderoy" work was here and there necessary, and there were many bridges, varying much in size, to be constructed. On all sides the work was very heavy and incessant and the heat considerable. The mosquitoes, sand-flies and black-flies drew blood freely and rendered sleep difficult; I had provided each man with a veil, but after a little while it was difficult to make them use it. It came in handy, however, later on for straining the Lake of the Woods water, which was densely loaded with vegetable matter. Many Canadian prophets of evil—opposed to the undertaking—had tried to frighten me with "traveller's yarns" of the torture we should suffer from these pests. They were, I confess, a great source of worry and annoyance, but my men made light of them. Besides the veils, I had

also supplied each boat with a can of "mosquito oil," such as I had found efficacious when salmon fishing on the Canadian rivers. But the men scorned it for that purpose, though they were glad to use it in their lamps later on. Fortunately it was not an explosive compound.

Whilst every one was hard at work as long as daylight lasted in preparing for our embarkation, a deputation arrived from the once great tribe of the Chippewahs or Ojibewahs—for Fame spells their names both ways—to ask me for what purpose I had come to their country and why I was making a road through it without having first come to terms with them, and so on. The orator of the party, whose title was "Blackstone," had travelled in a cart the last few miles of his journey to meet me, a mode of conveyance he had never tried before. The feeling of importance this novel position conferred upon him was, however, mingled with terror, as all Wood Indians have an instinctive dread of horses. Before entering the camp he stopped at a little stream to make his toilet. With a small piece of wet soap he plastered his black locks into long straight tails, then tied a mink skin round them, into which at the back of his head he stuck some eagle's feathers and fastened some ermine tails all around. His party consisted of a squaw, three men and two boys, all of whom were formally introduced into my presence. It is not always easy to look strictly solemn, though no Indian will ever even smile upon such occasions. He made a long speech with all the manner of a well-bred English gentleman and with much impressive gesticulation. The gist of what he said lay in the question of how much I meant to pay him and his immediate tribe as compensation for our invasion of his hereditary hunting grounds. It was a very natural question, for I could not but

feel that what we in our superior wisdom were pleased to describe as opening up the district meant to him and his people the eventual destruction of all the fur-bearing animals by the trapping and selling of which these Indians and their forebears had supported themselves and their families for generations. They expressed themselves as devotedly loyal to the "Great Mother," meaning the Queen, and as anxious to help us in all possible ways. I told them we were so busy at the moment that I could not attend to those matters, but that an officer at Fort Francis would be deputed to arrange them with him at that station. We parted on good terms, and the Chief was kind enough to say that in the meantime he hoped we should freely use all the wood and water we might require along our line of route. I ordered the Chief and each man of his party to be supplied with a suit of clothes : one and all selected a frock coat of the finest cloth, such being the garment dearest to all these poor simple fellows, although the least suited to their daily mode of life. In the course of my North American wanderings I have never encountered any Indian tribes without experiencing a feeling of remorse not only for having robbed them of their hunting grounds, but still more for killing them off with the fatal poison of whiskey.

Most of our boats required repairs by the time they had reached Shebandowan. To drag them up the roaring rapids and over the sharp rocks of the Kaministiguia River until they had reached this lake, 800 feet above the level of the waters they started from, was a stupendous task for the men and a serious trial to the boats. I had to establish a sort of dockyard on that lake where all were overhauled, duly mended, and fitted with oars, masts and sails. There I also re-coopered our barrels of pork, filling up with brine

those that had leaked during the very rough hauling they had encountered in this first section of the journey.

Mr. Dawson, an able and hardworking public servant, who had been the pioneer of the route we followed from Thunder Bay to the Lake of the Woods, did all in his power to help forward the expedition. I often pitied him, for his work was constant and the assistants sent to him by the Minister responsible for the department in the Canadian Cabinet were only too often drunkards or incapables; they mostly belonged, in fact, to the class well known in America as "loafers," who, when a liquor bar is handy, spend most of their time there. In this case some were the ne'er-do-weel friends of politicians then in office. Upon one occasion I met one of these "loafers" at a roadside station. When asked the nature of his occupation he said, without hesitation, that he had none in particular, his uncle had merely given him this billet in order that he might be taken at Government expense to Manitoba, where he had a brother whom he wanted to join.

We had experienced many very heavy thunderstorms whilst encamped at Prince Arthur's landing. There is much hematite iron in that neighbourhood, and I often wondered if its presence exercised any magnetic attraction over the electricity with which the heavens in that region seem to be specially charged. But during the night of July 15, when encamped at Shebandowan, we had a thunderstorm to which all the others—and we had had several—were merely boys' crackers compared with the firing of a monster gun. Whilst it lasted the heavens seemed at times to open and let fall great crushing weights of explosives upon the earth beneath, which apparently trembled at the shock. Then followed a rain the like of which I have never seen even in the Tropics. It

fell upon us, not in drops but literally as sheets of water in rapid succession. It suddenly began to fall and ended as abruptly. I had, a considerable time back, named the following day, July 16, for the final start of our expedition for Fort Garry. As is usually the case in such matters, when the day drew near my calculations seemed to have been all wrong, and few thought I could carry out the announcement I had made. I rejoiced much when this fearful storm overtook us that it had not come a day later. It was the thought uppermost in my mind as I heard the deafening peals of thunder and the splash of the, to me, unprecedented fall of rain which followed. To my extreme joy, day broke the following morning with all the promise of fine weather. A bright sun gladdened all, and soon dried the clothes of those who had suffered most during the rainstorm of the previous evening. Looking back to the trying events of our many wet and dreary bivouacs, where sleep came only in snatches, the misery of such nights is almost swallowed up and forgotten in my recollection of the exquisite joy which the bright sunny morning, that usually followed, shed on all of us. Even the poor devil who had had to pass the night on a muddy bed as best he could without his great-coat, soon smiled all over as the rays of a genial sun began to warm him. When all around us is thus brightened, generous hope once more resumes her sway and blots out the remembrance of recent misery. A strong westerly wind, however, set in with the first rays of daylight, and although it dried our clothes, it raised a big sea which broke violently in a heavy surf upon the sandy beach of McNeil's Bay. Whilst it lasted, all embarkations had to be suspended. It did not begin to abate until the sun had sunk near the horizon, but as soon as the boats already

launched could be safely brought alongside the bank to be loaded, the first embarkation began. It was late before the order to start was given to the first detachment, which consisted of two companies of the Royal Rifles, a party of Royal Artillery with two 7-pounder rifle guns, and another of Royal Engineers, all under the command of that excellent soldier, Colonel Feilden, of the Royal Rifles.

It was an exciting moment when we wished them "God-speed" with all our heart, and watched them pull away from that beach of gold-coloured sand, which still shone in all the bright glories of a setting sun. They quickly disappeared into the evening mist just then beginning to rise from the lake. I fully understood the great natural difficulties they would meet with and would have to overcome. But I was equally certain that if determined courage, strengthened by the best and highest military discipline, could possibly overcome all such obstacles, Colonel Feilden and his men would do it. The wind had died away, as it usually does there towards evening. The weather was delightful, the lake so lately stormy, was in its best and most placid beauty, reflecting on its mirror-like surface the beach and other trees on the high ground around it. For the moment all was still and quiet. The day's work was over. Strange to say, no hum of insect or chirp of bird ever comes from these northern parts of the Canadian forests, and there were no swallows to skim over the lake below and lend life to its great expanse of water.

The whole scene, with its picturesque military accessories, was for many reasons very impressive. It brought to my mind the stories read in boyhood of how wild bands of fierce Norse freebooters set out from some secluded bay in quest of plunder and adventure.

One great peculiarity of our undertaking struck me forcibly

at the time: that in an age, justly celebrated for its inventions and scientific progress, such a military expedition should start unaided in any fashion by either the steam engine or the electric telegraph. We were to depend exclusively upon sail and oar to reach our far-off destination, just as the Greeks and Romans had been forced to do in their foreign campaigns some twenty centuries before. Another curious fact was, that upon reaching our destination we should be as far from a telegraph station as Caesar was from Rome when he jumped ashore in Kent with his legions a little before the Christian era.

Several of the French-speaking politicians and their bigoted priests wished us to fail. The newspapers they influenced were anxious to frighten us with fanciful accounts of the great physical obstacles that lay in our path. They dwelt upon the courage of the half-breed enemy, who, it was said, sought to lure us on to the destruction that certainly awaited us. Possibly these stories may have helped to sell the newspapers in which they appeared: they certainly amused the brave men it was then my good fortune to command. Had the silly people who thus hoped to frighten us understood the British and Canadian soldiers under my command, they would have realized that their one dread was lest Riel should bolt without fighting when we neared Fort Garry. When news came from that station that he and the other murderers, his councillors, "meant business," joy ran freely through all ranks.

Between June 1 and when our leading companies started from Lake Shebandowan, July 16, it had rained upon twenty-three days, which was somewhat trying in the midst of our preparations. But the fact that those companies did start upon the day I had long before named for their departure

made glad the hearts of loyal men in Canada, and was taken as a good omen by all ranks of the Red River force.

As this leading detachment pushed out from shore and dipped their oars for the first time in the lake before them, they raised the shout, "For Fort Garry," and as it echoed round those beautiful shores all ranks for the first time, I think, appreciated the reality of the operation before them.

When the last detachment embarked on August 2, this little well-formed brigade covered a distance of 150 miles from front to rear. A rather long column! I do not believe there were ever hardier or handier soldiers in every way than those who constituted it. They were all carefully picked and had already become well seasoned by many weeks of heavy work. Their wants had been carefully attended to: all were well fed and had lived in the open air for the last seven or eight weeks. With such men all things are possible. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that I laughed at the many warnings of impending misfortunes that "the well-informed" hurled at me. I was assured that my column should be three times as strong as it was: that Riel and his ferocious half-breeds would destroy it on some carefully selected portage. In fact, we were warned that the fate of General Braddock and his troops awaited us. I doubt whether any British force ever began so serious an undertaking under blacker prophecies of impending disaster, which in some instances seemed meant as threats. It was stoutly affirmed that we should be devoured by mosquitoes and other venomous flies, which drove even the Indians from the woods in July, where the heat was then stifling: that the Chippewahs would compel us to pay large sums for going through their country, that the passage by their rivers could only be made in birch-bark canoes manned by skilled Indians.

It seemed to me that what annoyed those angry monitors most was not that their advice was not followed, but that they were not invited either "*to boss the show*" or even to take any part whatever in its plans or proceedings. When it was first talked of, they scoffed at the proposal that any British or Militia battalions should be sent in great boats over rivers where none but Indians and the most practised voyageurs had previously dared to venture. They said we had all gone mad, and that I was the greatest lunatic of the lot: that I might be a good soldier, but I was an idiot upon all matters connected with canoes and river work. The fact that I had been six or seven years in Canada, and had been a good deal in the woods, was ignored. In fine, we were looked upon as men whom the gods having doomed to destruction had first made mad.

I may here conveniently describe the crossing of a portage by a company. It was the same process in all instances, the only difference being in the length of the portage. Some were not more than one or two hundred yards in length, whilst a few were over a mile. The relative difficulties of portages—all other things being equal—are in direct ratio to the square of their length. From the description which I give of this one operation, the reader will learn the story of all, as the work at each portage was alike in character; the one exception being that made by the leading company which had imposed upon it the opening out of all the portages and the cutting down and laying the rollers along them. The poplar of about six or eight inches in diameter made the best rollers, as the boats could be hauled most easily over their soft and juicy bark. As a rule when each company reached a portage the company immediately in front had not yet quite cleared away from it. But until all the stores

of the company in possession of the portage had been taken across, the newly arrived company was not allowed to begin discharging provisions, etc., etc. This rule was necessary in order to avoid mixing the stores of the two companies. The labour of hauling across our boats and of carrying the sacks and barrels of provisions, all ammunition and stores contained in each was very great. Some of the portages were very rocky, others excessively steep, and some of considerable height and very long. As soon as each boat was launched into the smooth water above or below the portage, as the case might be, its crew reloaded it, and when all was ready the men embarked and pulled off a little to make room for the next boat on the portage. When all the boats had been taken across and reloaded, the captain's boat pulled away for the next portage, his other boats following as near together as possible. The boats of each company kept together throughout, so each company was the small integer of the expeditionary force. I usually travelled a little ahead with the best guide and "blazed" the remarkable trees as I went along to mark the direction that should be taken by all behind to lead them to the next portage. It was astonishing to see how handy at all boatwork our men soon became.

CHAPTER XL

Hear of the Emperor Louis Napoleon's Downfall

EVERY boat carried a bell-tent for the use of those in it. But tents were seldom pitched, as we worked daily until sunset, when we landed to cook our evening meal, and when it was eaten the time had come for sleep until we resumed the oar next morning at daybreak. I cannot remember having slept in a tent during the journey except for the two nights I spent at Fort Francis and the night before we occupied Fort Garry. During our long journey I was asleep one night upon a short portage. It was pitch dark, for the rain poured in torrents. I was very wet, and as I dozed with the rain splashing in my face I heard the sound of a paddle in the water close by. I jumped up, feeling certain it was my weekly post canoe, and so it was. A lanthorn was lit by my good friend and A.D.C., young Fred Denison, of the Governor-General's bodyguard, who was soon busily employed in opening the sealed letter-bag. The latest telegram contained the startling news that the French army had been destroyed or taken prisoners at Sedan, and that the Emperor Louis Napoleon had surrendered and was a prisoner in the German camp. I translated the telegram into French for the voyageurs about me, but they refused to believe it. They could not realize that the land of their proudest and most cherished traditions

could be thus humbled in the dust and struck down from the high position it had previously held amongst nations. They had been brought up in the faith that the French were the greatest people in Europe. Their honest, if sentimental, love for "La Belle France" was most touching, and raised them much in my esteem. Well, indeed, might some modern psalmist who had witnessed that curious scene in the wilds of the Canadian forest have recorded how those brave and feeling voyageurs, as they laid themselves down that night, wept as they thought of the former greatness of the land of their forefathers and realized its then fallen and forlorn state.

Before leaving Montreal for Lake Superior, I received this telegram from home. "Remember Butler, 69th Regiment." I had made that officer's acquaintance when his battalion was quartered at Montreal in the following way. Every summer some half-dozen regimental officers were employed on a military survey of the frontier between Canada and the United States. With a view to obtain good men for this special service a general order was published each year, that officers wishing to be so employed should send me specimens of their military sketches. Amongst the applicants in 1868 was Lieutenant, now General, Sir William Butler. When he came to see me on this business, I was much struck with the bright clearness of his intelligence and with his all-round intellectual superiority to the general run of our officers. I inquired about him from those who knew him well, and ascertained that he was not only by far the cleverest man in his battalion, but was well known generally for his energy and varied talents. Unable to employ him on this survey, I made a note of his name in case I should ever require the services of an officer who was

evidently a good active talented and trustworthy man. I had long been in the habit of keeping a list of the best and ablest soldiers I knew, and was always on the look-out for those who could safely be entrusted with any special military piece of work. Butler struck me as being just such a man, so his name had been duly recorded upon it. This telegram did not therefore come from one of whom I knew nothing. When on my way to Thunder Bay he overtook me at Toronto. Up to that time the only information we had received from the Red River territory had come from unreliable sources. It came either from disloyal French-speaking priests, who had their own objects to serve, or from Hudson Bay officials, who wrote in terror of their lives, and in a trading sense only, and lastly from the over-awed loyal minority, who feared to speak their minds openly, dreading the consequences of any bold expression of opinion. Lieutenant Butler was just the man I wanted to go round through the United States to the Red River for the purpose of finding out how matters really stood there, and then to come and meet me when I had made about half the distance to Fort Garry. At Toronto I gave him a brief outline of my plans, and told him the date I calculated upon for reaching Fort Francis at the mouth of the Red River, where it falls into Lake Winnipeg, and lastly, the day upon which I hoped to arrive at Fort Garry. I explained that I wanted an able soldier, whom I could trust implicitly, to go viâ the United States to the Red River Settlement to judge for himself as to the condition of affairs there. I said I required information as to what this half-breed rising meant? Who were at the bottom of it? Was Riel a puppet in the hands of others, and what were the grievances—if any—of those with whom he acted? and so forth. Knowing the time of

my probable arrival, he was to meet me in the neighbourhood of Fort Francis upon the date I told him I hoped to reach it.

This roving commission, that required so many rare qualities, was one after his own heart, and he was just the man to carry it out admirably. We parted at Toronto, both bound for the same destination but by different routes. He carried out his instructions in the most satisfactory way, and met me in the middle of the great wild forest at the place and upon the date I had arranged with him. What a comfort it is to have able and determined men to deal with! But it is not easy to find men of Sir William Butler's genius. They are not available at every season, nor do they grow on every bush. Since then we have been comrades in many expeditions, and I am proud to reckon him amongst my best and most loyal friends. In genius and in inventive power, as it can be employed in all the various phases of war, he is second to none of the able soldiers who have been my friends and associates throughout a long and varied military career. Even amongst them, his great imaginative faculty—that quality so rare, so much above the other gifts, required for excellence in military leaders—marked him out pre-eminently. It is to the apparent want of that uncommon gift on the part of commanders, more than to any lack of numbers or of guns or of horses, that we must often look for the inordinate prolongation of our wars. It is imagination, educated by practical experience in war, that enables the commander to foresee what his enemy will do under the circumstances which any change of policy may rapidly develop, so that he, the commander, may be ready promptly and effectively to checkmate him.

Before starting for Thunder Bay I had sent a proclamation to Fort Garry addressed to the inhabitants of the adjoining

settlement telling them the objects of my expedition, and calling upon all loyal subjects of Queen Victoria to assist me in their accomplishment. I sent a covering letter with the copy forwarded to the Hudson Bay Company's officer at Fort Garry, in which I begged he would do his utmost to finish with all speed the road which some time before had been begun from the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods to his station. I had no intention of using it, but I wished Riel to believe that I meant to do so, in order that he might look for me in that locality and not by the Winnipeg River and Fort Alexander route which I had settled in my own mind to follow. This ruse had the desired effect, for I learnt at Fort Francis that he had sent a party of half-breeds to a spot near where that road reached the Lake of the Woods.

Before leaving Prince Arthur's Landing, I had despatched a loyal and trustworthy half-breed to the Red River Settlement viâ that unfinished road. His orders were to meet me at Fort Francis on July 31 with the latest news of the rebel doings. He carried out this dangerous mission most successfully, and met me as arranged. He had left his home near the Lower Fort on the Red River on July 20, bringing me letters from our Protestant Bishop there with valuable information as to supplies and as to the rebel proceedings. He said every one in the settlement lived in a state of abject dread. The English and French mutually distrusted each other, and both feared the Indians, whose loyalty had been shaken by Riel's conduct. But all the messages I received ended with the same earnest appeal that I should push on as quickly as possible, for no one could say what a day might bring forth.

Under the influence of the French party in Parliament

the Canadian Government had recently passed a Bill which practically conceded all the half-breeds in the Red River had demanded. This Bill was settled with the French Bishop from Fort Garry, who had gone to Ottawa for that purpose.

He strove his utmost to obtain an indemnity for his friend Riel that would have screened him from all punishment for his rebellion, for having robbed the loyal party on the Red River, and for his cruel and deliberate murder of Mr. Scott. This scheming prelate had assured Riel that if he would be guided by him—the Bishop—he need have no fear of punishment for his crimes, as his influence at Ottawa was so powerful that he would certainly be able to secure him from all legal prosecutions. But he failed to accomplish this part of his scheme, and was consequently much alarmed lest his friend, Riel the murderer, should upset the project by some attempt at resistance.

The important news I received at Fort Francis from Lieutenant William Butler was that Riel was in a perplexed state of mind, not knowing how far he could trust his intriguing Bishop. When his fear of the scaffold was somewhat allayed by the promised amnesty, he talked very big of coming out to welcome me to the Red River, and hand over to me the government of the country. His hesitation at this moment lost him the goodwill and support of many a French half-breed and would-be rebel. But he still talked big at times, and he published proclamations in his own name as if he were the undisputed ruler of the territory.

At Fort Francis I learned, as I had expected, that there was no possibility of my being able to use the road between the north-west corner of the Lake of the Woods and Fort Garry. I had therefore no other resource but to continue my advance by water. I should consequently have to face the much

feared rapids of the Winnipeg River, which connects the great lake of that name with the Lake of the Woods. This was the most dangerous part of our journey, and which I most dreaded.

In crossing the Lake of the Woods we came in for stormy weather, and the waves were high at times, when white horses broke into drifting spray. It is much crowded with islands, and as no good map had ever been made of it many of our companies lost their way. My boat, as usual, was some distance in front, and I went astray several times in long reaches from which there was no outlet but that by which I had entered them. This was very annoying, and the romantic scenery of trees and rocks, of earth and water, in all their varied and picturesque combinations, did not soothe my annoyance at the delays thus occasioned. And yet as I now think of those brightly beautiful and wooded inlets, of their great stretches of yellow sand, of their many steep and pink-tinted cliffs and lichen-covered rocks, often pictured as it were in a looking glass upon the lake below, I long at times to revisit those beautiful scenes; to lie upon their deep, tufted moss and think of an eventful life, and dream of the might have been.

When I passed there silence reigned supreme. The dip of the paddle at regular intervals and the occasional weird whistle of the loon were the only sounds we heard. There, indeed, at that time, the man wearied of life's mockeries might revel in the exquisite sensation of being alone and far away from the noisy and vulgar whirl of civilization.

The great water-basin of which this Lake of the Woods is an important feature, drains into Lake Winnipeg by the splendid river of that name. That river bursts from the former lake by several rocky channels, and rushing and

roaring as it tumbles into a great seething basin below, re-unites there. These channels form several small but extremely picturesque little islands, upon one of which stands the Hudson Bay Post of Rat Portage. It consists of a few log houses surrounded by high wooden palisades. It is a sweet spot amidst the spray and roaring noise of the mighty river rushing by it.

What a strange and lonely existence is led by the few white men at these isolated posts! Most of them were of North British origin, a large proportion coming from the Orkney Islands. Honest, hard-working men inured from childhood to a rough mode of life, they made excellent servants for the Hudson Bay Company in their distant possessions. The best come to the top and become eventually leading men in the Company's business, many growing rich, some of them extremely wealthy. The gentleman in charge at Rat Portage was a half-breed married to a squaw and had been there for thirteen years. He was well educated, had read much, and could talk pleasantly of what he knew.

I took a great interest in the Company's affairs at that time, and during my short halt under his hospitable roof I learnt much regarding their dealings with the Indians. No promise made to them is ever broken in the smallest particular, a fact which I hope may have taught them a good lesson, and which had certainly enabled the Company to trade successfully with them for the last two centuries. Each post was a little centre of Christianity, and although no attempt at proselytism was made, the Gospel virtues of truth and honest dealing between man and man were taught by example. I invariably looked over the books possessed by those in charge of these posts. There was always a Bible, a Shakespeare and a few of Sir Walter Scott's novels.

But, oh! how dreary must have been their winters, cut off from all communication with civilization, and with very little to occupy either mind or body.

It was curious to examine the articles sent to such posts for barter with the Indians. The latter are very conservative by instinct. If they have become accustomed to an article of a certain size, shape or colour, these sons of Hiawatha will buy no other. For many generations they had bought long swallow-tailed coats of fine blue cloth with brass buttons, and would not look at any other pattern. In this neighbourhood there was practically no game, so the Indians lived upon fish. Sturgeon in great quantity abounded in the Lake of the Woods, and was excellent eating.

The country we had passed through between Thunder Bay and Fort Francis was a wild rocky desert, but covered wherever the pine can grow with poor stunted trees. There was very little soil anywhere, seldom enough to hold a tent-peg, but I was never in any country that supplied the traveller with a more comfortable bivouac. With a blanket wrapped round the body, it was easy to sleep soundly on the deep, soft, and springy moss that abounded everywhere. It was indeed a rare thing to see a tent pitched on any portage between Thunder Bay and Fort Garry. At the former place we had come in for a rich crop of wild raspberries, and during our subsequent journey the blueberries made a good dessert to the Company's mess of salt pork and biscuit.

During the journey to Fort Francis we seldom had a favourable wind, and had consequently to depend entirely upon our oars. The easterly breeze that would have helped us on many a lake and river would, however, have brought

more rain, of which we already had an ample supply. Though we had very wet bivouacs we always had good fires, for there was plenty of wood to burn everywhere, and the soldier knows what that means to him when in the field. Our daily routine was: "Reveillé" at the first streak of daylight, often before it. This was always followed by the shout of "Fort Garry," the shibboleth of our expedition. If any tents had been pitched they were struck at once, and stowed away in the boats. All hands were soon hard at work with their oars, and this continued until about 8 a.m., when there was an hour's halt for breakfast. At 1 p.m. we halted for another hour for dinner, and about 6 or 7 p.m. the day's work came to an end. In about a week all became expert in the art of making a good fire and in cooking rapidly. It was surprising how quickly our soldiers became handy at all kinds of forest work. But their appearance would have horrified any home service Adjutant. Their clothes generally were much torn, and some were very ragged from the loads all ranks carried on their backs; the seats of their trousers were in a disastrous condition, the best of them being patched with the rough sacking of the empty biscuit sacks, and the hands, arms, faces and necks of men and officers were as brown as those of the darkest coloured Ojibbewah. When bathing all ranks presented a magpie appearance, with head, neck and hands nearly black, in marked contrast with the white skin of their bodies.

No one ever fell sick. I was asked to have our senior doctor promoted when the expedition came to an end, but refused, because he had had nothing to do, there never having been any sick for him to cure.

How can I do justice to the cheery pluck, endurance and good humour of the rank and file of that brigade? They

had had much to bear with during the journey, but the greatest disappointment was that of having had no fight at the end of it. They bore it with resignation, but it was a galling disappointment, for all ranks were keenly anxious to pitch into those cruel half-breed rebels, and longed to hang Riel on the spot where he had murdered the unoffending Mr. Scott.

Of what an adaptable nature is the British and Colonial officer! He throws so much energy into whatever really hard work he may have to do that somehow or other he gets through the most difficult and complicated jobs with credit, owing mainly, I think, to his deep sense of public duty and of what, as a gentleman, he feels he owes to the State. His training, his field sports and usual amusements, fit him to lead our men better than any other class could do. When there is hard work to be done all those good qualities appear which make him the best man to lead others. During this expedition our officers carried barrels of pork and other loads as their men did over the portages. There was the truest comradeship between them and their men, whilst discipline, as we understand that high virtue, was strictly maintained.

At Rat Portage I received further letters from our English bishop in the Red River Settlement, giving me the latest news from that place. He and the English-speaking people there had also sent me what I stood most in need of, I mean really good and reliable guides. Without their help I must have lost many men in descending the Winnipeg, that most difficult and dangerous of Canadian rivers. They came under the command of the Rev. Mr. Gardner, an English clergyman, and their arrival was an outward and visible proof that there did exist in that far-off settlement an active party of loyal men. Of course, I eagerly questioned these

guides about our route down the Winnipeg River, and their answers would have terrified any whose hearts were not as stout as were those who had come there with me from Thunder Bay. Looking back now at the events of our exciting journey I feel that had not all ranks been as well broken-in to working in the difficult and dangerous waters we had already so successfully surmounted, our descent of the Winnipeg River would have been impossible, indeed out of the question. When those skilled voyageurs saw the boats we had come in they were struck dumb with astonishment, and evidently thought us a mad lot to think of facing the river then before us in any such craft. They soon realized, however, not only that we meant to face it, but that there was no use in trying to dissuade us from what they were pleased to style a rash, a wild venture. They plainly told me that none but those who were not only thoroughly skilled and experienced in canoes, but also well acquainted with the Winnipeg, would attempt its navigation at all.

This was one of the many occasions in my life when I have found it to be popularly supposed that though the British soldier is on all hands admitted to be brave and trustworthy as a fighting man, he is not thought to be of much use in any other capacity—in fact, that he is not a "handy man." A lengthened and intimate acquaintance with him in all climates, under an infinite variety of circumstances and of sore trials by land and water in moments of extreme danger, in cold and in misery, enables and justifies me, and in fact calls upon me, to give these statements an unqualified denial. Of course, he is very much what he is made and as he is taught by his officers, and I would strongly advise the Captain of a Company who finds his men fail him in any moments of extreme danger or other trial, to resign

his commission. His is the fault, and he is not fit to command British soldiers. If he were "the right sort," his men would never fail him; if he knew his work and had properly trained and taught those under him, he would not have to complain of them in any hour of trial.

I found it to be the common idea all along the route we travelled from Toronto to Fort Garry, that our men and officers could not carry loads over portages, nor perform any arduous labour. But I know also that we left behind us, upon the minds of all who saw us at work upon any of the many portages we crossed, a very different impression. When I refer to the manly virtue of the British soldier, of course I include the splendid soldiers of Canada under that general designation. Indeed, in some respects they are better than our Regulars, for, owing to their colonial bringing-up, they have more initiative, and are more self-reliant.

I had calculated that each Company would take ten days from Rat Portage to Fort Alexander, which is near the mouth of the Winnipeg River, and below all its thirty falls and rapids. The difference in level between these two places is 340 feet, and the distance some 160 miles. When, therefore, the party from the Red River Settlement assured me it would take double that time I was much put out. I had long fixed upon August 23 as the date upon which I should reach Fort Garry, but if these practised voyageurs were correct I should not be there until September 2 at earliest. But I hoped they had erred in their estimate from not knowing what the men of my Brigade could do. This was a serious matter, as the Regular troops had to get back to Montreal over the same route before the frost set in on the Height of Land which forms the water-shed between the Red River and Thunder Bay.

No one who has ever descended the Winnipeg River in boat or canoe is ever likely to forget that experience. As for myself, the falls, the rapids, the whirlpools, the great rushing angry waters, and the many hair-breadth escapes its navigation involved, are indelibly stamped upon my memory. We had one or two boats wrecked, but no life was lost. The pleasurable excitement of danger is always an agreeable experience, but the enthralling delight of feeling your frail canoe or boat bound under you, as it were, down a steep incline of wildly rushing waters into what looks like a boiling, steaming cauldron of bubbling and confused waters, exceeds most of the other maddening delights that man can dream of. Each man strains for his life at oar or paddle, for no steerage-way can be kept upon your boat unless it be made to run quicker than the water. All depends upon the nerve and skill of the bowsman and steersman, who take you skilfully through the outcropping rocks around you. But the acme of excitement is of short duration, and the pace is too quick to admit of self-examination. No words can describe the rapid change of sensation when the boat jumps through the last narrow and perhaps twisted passage between rocks, into an eddy of the slack water below! You had—perhaps unknowingly—held your breath, whilst every nerve was nigh to breaking point, during the moments of supreme danger; but in a few seconds of time afterwards a long breath of relief comes that enables you to say, "Thank God!" with all heartfelt sincerity.

I made the descent of the Winnipeg River in a birch-bark canoe manned by Irroquois Indians, the most daring and skilful of Canadian voyageurs. The Slave Falls is one of the most beautifully impressive pieces of water in that rapidly running river. The portage by which travellers descending

this river take their canoes round these falls begins some few hundred yards above them, and is reached without danger. But to my horror the guide took my canoe into midstream, where the current runs down a considerable decline at a most exciting pace. My first wild notion was that he had mistaken these falls for some others, and that nothing then could save us. I sat motionless, speechless and awe-stricken as we raced along the last and swiftest decline into the column of mist and spray, which rising from below seemed to mark the point where the water jumped from the edge of the falls into the steaming frothing jumble of bubbling foam and boisterous waters below. My bowsman was a portly Irroquois whom I did not like much, but he had a jowl that bespoke courageous determination to a remarkable degree. As he dipped his broad paddle far out into the stream upon one side to draw the canoe hard over after it, he had, like most Indians when excited, thrown off his hat, and as his long straight black hair flew back behind his neck and shoulders, I saw his face clearly. It was enough. His lips were closely pressed together, and there was an unmistakable expression of satisfied determination, of assured triumph, about him that said without words, "All is well." In less time than it has taken to write this, the bow turned sharp in towards the shore, and the canoe was in fairly slack water, where two of the crew jumping out held her secure. My bowsman, throwing his broad paddle into the air and catching it again, gave a shout of victory, and all the crew burst out into hilarious and triumphant laughter. Nothing could have saved us from destruction had that paddle broken when he held on to it in the current—as if it were a fixed iron pillar—to draw the canoe's head in towards shore. Nothing pleases or satisfies these Irroquois more

than such trials of strength, such victories over dangerous water, which is truly their element. I suppose that by this time the tribe exists no longer as the most daring and skilful of men in all river navigation. The enervating effect of civilization and whiskey upon even the best of uneducated races soon robs them of courage and of all other manly virtues.

I reached Fort Alexander on August 18, and by the 20th all the regulars of the brigade had assembled there. There was not a sick or ailing man amongst them. All looked the picture of health and of soldierlike bearing, though heavy rain had given them wet bivouacs thirteen out of those twenty days in August.

The news from Fort Garry was that Riel had called his followers together, and that 600 of them had answered the summons. He had endeavoured to organize them to resist us, but he was not able to imbue them with any fighting ardour. He was still much troubled in mind about an amnesty, but the Ottawa Government dared not grant it, and even if they had, I assume that the Governor, Lord Lisgar, would not have sanctioned any such outrageous proceeding. As in all previous correspondence, the loyal inhabitants besought me to advance without delay. On the whole, the general tenor of the news indicated that Riel would fight. That cheered our men's hearts. We waited until the following afternoon, Sunday, August 21, in the hope that the two leading companies of militia might arrive in time to go on with us to Fort Garry. I was most anxious to have some of them with me when I attacked Riel, should he decide to fight, but I confess I did not believe that either he or his followers would dare to do so.

The afternoon of Sunday, August 21, was very fine when our little fleet of fifty boats, manned by regular soldiers, set

sail for the mouth of the Red River. We halted for the night in a lovely and well-wooded bay on Lake Winnipeg, our boats drawn up in close order upon its sandy shore. What an interesting picture our bivouac was when viewed from the high bank where I established myself for the night! Our fires lit up the evening sky, and the temperature was that of a summer evening in the south of Europe. The next morning we steered for the mouth of the Red River, where it joins Lake Winnipeg.[1] That lake is often very stormy and its great waves detained the leading companies of militia, and prevented them, to my regret, from entering Fort Garry with me. As we neared the Red River I was struck with the great contrast between its scenery and the rich beauty of the land and water we had just left behind us. Not a tree was to be seen, only great alluvial flats covered with reeds and rushes, from whose recesses the wild-duck in vast numbers quacked out a loud greeting as we passed. We landed for dinner at a small Indian encampment. Its inhabitants fired their guns to do us honour, and a few presents to their chief soon converted them into helpful friends. They manned a small canoe which started with a half-breed for the lower or Stone Fort on the river and carried messages from me to the Hudson Bay officer in charge there. I had been overtaken on the Winnipeg River by Mr. Smith, now Lord Strathcona, who was then the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company. From him I received every possible help. Indeed, it was by his orders that all his Company's officials assisted us from first to last

[1] To give my reader an idea of its size I would remark that its area is about 9,000 square miles and that it drains some 400,000 square miles of country. It is very shallow, however, having only an average depth of from six to eight feet. It is said to be filling up.

to the best of their ability. His word was law in those regions. The garrison of two battalions that I left behind at Fort Garry when I started upon my return journey to Montreal, owed much of their comfort during the following long winter months to his kindness. He did all he could to provide for their wants.

Dinner over, we rowed in three lines of boats up the river, our 6-pounder guns in the leading line, and all men ready for action at any moment. We had the wind against us, so we did not reach the Lower Fort that evening as I had hoped.

Upon landing for the night, the chief of the Swampy Indians, who inhabit that locality, paid me a " visit of ceremony." He knew we had started from Lake Superior, but no further news of us had lately reached the Settlement. Until he had seen our boats coming round the river bend he was not aware that even our leading detachment had reached Fort Alexander. The Hudson Bay officer from the Lower Fort, who arrived in the middle of the night, corroborated this statement. He reported that the Fort Garry people did not expect us so soon, and beyond the fact that some of our boats had been seen by Indians on the Lake of the Woods, our doings and whereabouts were unknown to them.

We reached the Lower Fort next morning, August 23, for breakfast, our advance having had much of the triumphal procession about it. As we neared it, the people turned out and cheered us heartily. All the churches below Fort Garry were then Protestant, and their bells now rang out a joyful greeting. As we passed the Indian camps, the occupants of every wigwam came bounding out to fire a salute in honour of the Great Queen's soldiers. When we reached the Stone Fort, the Union Jack was run up by the servants

of the Hudson Bay Company, and as I landed joy was written on the face of everyone. All loyal men had suffered much at the hands of Riel, and terror had seized upon them. His murder of Mr. Scott had had the effect he desired upon the loyal section of the community, for each man in it believed that his life also might be sacrificed at any moment, and remained quiet in consequence.

By discharging all my surplus stores at the Stone Fort, I lightened our boats considerably. I took possession of all the carts and ponies I could find, and thus mounted a number of the Royal Rifles, who marched on both banks of the river to cover the advance upon Fort Garry next day, and protect our boats from surprise. Unhappily, the wind was against us all day, so our progress with oars alone and against the current was very slow. To my extreme regret I was unable to reach Riel's headquarters before darkness set in, and had to bivouac for the night within six miles of them. All ranks were much cheered by the "shave" that ran like wildfire from boat to boat that night, that we were to have a fight next morning. But heavy rain with all its depressing effects at such a moment, came pouring down upon us soon after nightfall. We had looked forward to at least a pretty little field day when our line of skirmishers should enclose Fort Garry and its rebel garrison, as in a net. But by early dawn next morning the whole country, far and near, was a sea of deep and clinging mud. There was then nothing approaching a road in the whole territory, so I had to forego all pomp and circumstance of war in my final advance and had once more to take to our boats and the dreary oar. We were all wet through, very cold and extremely cross and hungry. A cup of hot tea and a biscuit swallowed quickly for breakfast, and all were again at the

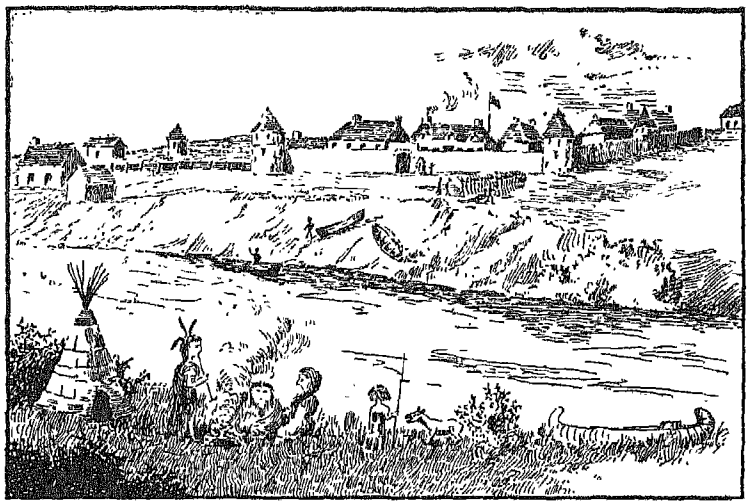
oar by 6 a.m., August 24, 1870. The rain poured "in buckets" upon us, and at places the country was under water. As we neared the cathedral of the English bishop, the Union Jack was loosed from its steeple as an evidence to all people that the rebel rule had ceased and that our Queen's authority was once more paramount there.

I landed at Point Douglas, only two miles from Fort Garry, by road, but six by the river, which there makes a wide bend. A few carts were seized, into which tools and ammunition were transferred, and to two of which the trails of our two small field-pieces were fastened and thus dragged along. The messengers I had sent the previous night into the village round Fort Garry met me here with the assurance that Riel and his gang were still there awaiting anxiously the arrival of Bishop Taché, who was hourly expected. It was confidently asserted that he meant to fight. He had just distributed ammunition—stolen from the Hudson Bay Company's stores—amongst his followers, had had the fort guns loaded, and had closed the gates. I subsequently learned that he and his henchman, a common fellow named Donoghue, had started from Fort Garry during the night to find out where I was and what I was about. But the very heavy rain they encountered was too much for them, and being afraid of capture by our outposts in the dark, they had gone back to the fort as wise as they had left it.

Our march, though short, was very trying from the heavy rain and the deep mud we had to plough through. But as all the people we met assured the men we should have a fight, these small and disagreeable drawbacks were ignored.

Fort Garry stands upon the left bank of the Red River, where the Assiniboine falls into it. The fort itself is a high stone-walled square enclosure, with a large circular tower

at each of its four corners. The village of Winnipeg—mostly of wooden houses—was nearly half a mile to the north of the fort, and south of it, at about a couple of hundred yards distance, was a boat bridge over the Assiniboine. My object therefore was by circling round west of the fort to obtain possession of that bridge, or at least to command it with my fire. I should then have Riel and company in the right angle inclosed between the two rivers. Our skirmishers in their advance captured a few of Riel's



FORT GARRY
(from a contemporary engraving).

so-called councillors, who were bolting in buggies and other means of conveyance.

As I watched the muzzles of the fort guns, I confess that I hoped each moment to see a flash and to hear a round shot rush by me. I knew they had no shells, and that they did not know how to use them if they had had any. But in the rain, and in the thick atmosphere when the rain ceased for a little, it was difficult to see, even through our glasses, if there

were men at the guns or not. I sent a few officers who had obtained ponies round the fort to see what was going on in rear of it. They soon returned with the news that Riel had bolted, and that the fort gates were open. It was a sad disappointment to all ranks. Personally I was glad that Riel did not come out and surrender, as he at one time said he would, for I could not then have hanged him as I might have done had I taken him prisoner when in arms against his sovereign. But though we did not catch the fellow, we had successfully carried out the task that was given us. My chief regret was, that neither of the two militia battalions with me had been able to be in at the finish. Every message received from the Red River had urged me to press forward with all speed, as no one could predict what a day lost might bring forth, and I felt bound to do so. But knowing how gallantly and how hard those two militia battalions had worked to get to Fort Garry, I was indeed truly sorry for the disappointment they experienced.

We dragged out some of the guns in Fort Garry, upon which Riel had relied so much, and with them fired a Royal Salute when the Union Jack was run up the flagstaff. From it had hung for months before the rebel flag that had been worked by the nuns of the convent attached to Bishop Taché's cathedral, and presented by them to Riel.

Neither he nor his friends had expected us so early, in fact he had only bolted when news was suddenly brought to him that our skirmishers were in sight. His breakfast was still on the table, and the clothes and arms of himself and party were scattered about his room when we entered it, showing the suddenness and haste of his flight.

I subsequently ascertained that he and his Irish colleague had some difficulty in escaping. They knew that if they

fell into the hands of the loyal settlers they might expect a short shrift. They consequently hurried off as quickly from the fort as they could when our troops came in sight. They soon crossed the Red River, feeling it was safer to have it between them and those who sought to bring them to justice. They hurried on until dark, when they bivouacked for the night. Next morning they found themselves without horses, those they had stolen the day before having strayed off during the night. There were but few farms near on their bank of the river, hence to obtain food they were compelled to cross to the other side. They could find no boat, so proceeded to pull down a snake fence to make a raft. Having no ropes to fasten the rails together, Donoghue was obliged to sacrifice for this purpose the trousers he had lately stolen in Fort Garry. Having safely crossed the river, the farmer whose fence they had pulled down compelled them to pay well for the damage they had done. Shortly afterwards they reached the frontier town of Pembina, in the United States territory, in a forlorn condition, without shoes and with sore and swollen feet. Finding he did not there meet with the cordial reception he had expected from the American citizens, he went to a village some fifty miles to the westward, to which he had previously sent the best of his plunder. He evidently found the game of rebellion an interesting and profitable occupation, for, some fourteen years afterwards, he embarked in another similar revolt. He was less fortunate in his second effort, as he was taken prisoner and duly hanged. No murderer ever better deserved his fate.

Having made arrangements for housing the two militia battalions in Fort Garry for the winter, I sent off between August 29 and September 3, the battalion of the Royal Rifles

and the detachments of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers to Montreal by the same route we had come by. The two militia battalions remained in Fort Garry all the ensuing winter. The Royal Rifles embarked for England that autumn, and are therefore the last regular troops that have served in the beautiful and loyal provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Raised originally in North America for service against the French and Indians, it was but fitting that a battalion of this far-famed and historic regiment should have been the last of our Regular Forces to serve in the grand and lovely valley of the St. Lawrence. I wonder when we shall again have any of our British regiments there? Withdrawn solely for economical reasons, they may yet return when our Imperial position in the world is better understood and appreciated by the nation than it was by our Ministers in 1870.

As a military undertaking, the Red River Expedition was peculiar in many ways. I believe it was the cheapest operation we have ever carried out, when what was accomplished is fairly weighed and considered. The total expense was under £100,000. For that sum about 1,400 men were sent by rail and steamer some 52 miles and then in canoes and boats for 600 miles through a wilderness of rivers, lakes, forests and rocks, where, as no food was to be obtained, everything required had to be taken with us and transported on the soldiers' backs over difficult portages for many miles.

I attribute this economic result chiefly to the fact that it was planned and organized far away from all War Office influence and meddling, and that an able general on the spot—the Hon. James Lindsay, then Commanding in Canada—was allowed a free hand in all that concerned its efficiency. The Cabinet and Parliamentary element in the War Office, that has marred so many a good military scheme, had, I may

say, little or nothing to do with it from first to last. When will civilian Secretaries of State for War cease from troubling in war affairs ?

Whilst we were thus busy in forcing our way through and over great natural obstacles to the Red River Settlement to put down an insignificant rebellion, a great war between two powerful European nations raged in France. In England, as elsewhere throughout the civilized world, all thoughts were bent upon its startling events. Would the French Imperial Guard once more strut as conquerors through Prussian cities ? or was Von Moltke to dictate terms to a French Government from his camp in the Champs Elysées ? Those were the subjects which then absorbed public interest in every land. No one even at home paid much, if any, attention to our proceedings in a territory whose great rivers and forests were unknown to them even by name. Our home press was naturally absorbed in a deep consideration of the great military and political problems this Franco-German war had revived. None had room in their columns for any consideration or discussion of far-off prairie affairs. There was no one in authority to say even " Well done ! " to the men whose daring, high military spirit and unsurpassed endurance I have endeavoured to describe. But all of us had something far better than any honours or decorations could have given—I mean the satisfaction of knowing that under difficult and trying circumstances all had done their duty to the best of their ability.

So ended this Red River Expedition sent by the Government of Canada to put down Riel's rebellion and restore order in what is now the splendid province of Winnipeg. As far as fighting is concerned, it was a bloodless campaign, and although great physical difficulties were encountered

and manfully overcome by the troops employed, not a life had been lost.

All ranks, both of the Regular and Militia Troops employed, worked as hard as galley slaves throughout this expedition, and they did so cheerfully and intelligently. All were better soldiers, and would, in civil life, be able to earn their bread to better advantage than when they had landed on the shores of Thunder Bay. Every man's heart had been in this novel enterprise, for all had been taken into their leader's confidence; no attempt had been made to conceal, or even to minimise, the serious obstacles that lay in their path, and they showed their appreciation of this confidence, not only by the amount of work they got through, but by the cheery manner in which they did it. I can draw no distinction between the relative merits or military value of the Regular Soldiers and the Canadian Militiamen who went with me to Red River. Each had arrived at Prince Arthur's Landing with special attributes peculiarly his own, but by the time Fort Garry had been occupied each had acquired the military virtues of the other. What is it that a large army of such men under some great leader could not achieve? I, for one, don't know.

I made my way back to Montreal over the lakes, rivers and the mountain range I had previously crossed on my way westward to Fort Garry. I was well received by old friends in the commercial capital of Canada, where I was entertained at a public dinner given in my honour.

I returned to England in the steamship that took home General Sir James Lindsay upon the abolition of his position as commanding the forces in Canada. The Government had determined upon the withdrawal of all our troops from the valley of the St. Lawrence in its craze for economy at

all costs. In fact, it seemed to be the general wish of the party then in office to get rid of our colonial possessions as a source of weakness, and above all things, in the interests of national economy. It was a most unstatesmanlike policy, for as long as we kept a few British battalions in the chief towns of Canada we fostered a living and most useful flesh-and-blood connection between it and the Mother Country. Its people highly valued the presence of Royal Troops amongst them, for it helped to foster the feeling of British nationality to which they attached so much importance, and these troops also provided the means for giving some military instruction to their splendid Militia. To officers who, like myself, had long been associated with that force in camps and cantonments, it seemed to be the action of madness, not of Statesmen, to withdraw from them that efficacious means of instruction in a soldier's duties. We knew that, should England at any time require help in a serious war, the Canadian Militia might be depended upon to furnish a most valuable contingent. But that was not a consideration that had much weight with either Mr. Gladstone or his colleagues.

In leaving Canada I parted from several staunch and able friends to whom I owed much for many a kind action. Foremost in that number were Mr. George Stephen, now Lord Mount-Stephen, and Colonel George Denison, of the Canadian Militia. The first I had known well throughout my long service in America as a wise and able man, an honest straightforward counsellor in all matters and a real friend in need. Natural gifts strengthened by deep study have made the latter better fitted for high military command than ninety-five per cent. of our Army officers. It is a source of pride to me to have known intimately and to be still the friend of two such men.

CHAPTER XLI

Army Reform Begun in Earnest, 1871

I WAS supposed to have done very well in command of the Red River Expedition, and upon my return home, was received by the Commander-in-Chief, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, in a flattering manner and with all that *bonhommie* for which he is so well known in our Army. I found he knew much about Canadian politics and was well informed regarding all matters that related to the rebellion in the Red River and to the military measures taken to suppress it. He asked me a great deal about the Canadian military forces, in whom he was much interested, and was much gratified when I expressed a very high opinion of their loyalty, zeal and general efficiency. He was good enough to let me understand that I might expect early re-employment upon the staff. But I soon found that according to the views then entertained by our old general officers, I had committed a serious crime in presuming to express my views upon military matters as freely as I had done in *The Soldier's Pocket Book*, a military handbook I had recently published. However, Mr. Cardwell was then Secretary of State for War, and I was told it was his intention that I should be appointed to the Headquarter Staff upon the first suitable opportunity. He had already determined upon

the abolition of purchase, and wanted men about him in the War Office with modern views upon Army matters.

The startling suddenness with which war had been declared by Prussia, great battles won and proud France struck down and brought to her knees, set all Europe thinking. The rapid but evidently well calculated sequence with which momentous events had followed upon the opening of this war had roused the conscience of the most peace-loving of our statesmen. It silenced even those who had been loudest in denunciation of war as the inhuman practice of a barbarous age, and in their honest, though foolish, pooh-poohing of any possibility of its recurrence upon a great scale in civilized Europe. The humane theories they had loudly asserted and preached from thousands of platforms to audiences only too anxious to agree with them, had vanished in the smoke of the German breechloader. The great war of 1870 taught us serious lessons upon all military subjects. The sudden collapse of the French army, which in the Crimea we had regarded with admiration and esteemed so highly, astonished us and most of the European nations. It had gone down before the thoroughly drilled and well taught short-service army of Prussia.

In 1868, when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, the refrain of all our political music was a glorification of the protection afforded by our insular position in Europe. But men began now to question the soundness of this faith. The shock was felt everywhere. The slow-moving and ever unready England felt this Franco-German earthquake, and it seems to have awakened even Mr. Gladstone, one of the most peace-loving, war-detesting Ministers who ever ruled any nation's destinies. For the moment, at least, the possibility of war being forced unexpectedly upon us became a

necessary factor in all our calculations of the national dangers it behoved us to be prepared for. The fate of France had struck terror even into the hearts of men who had previously never wearied of crying "Peace, peace; war is a past horror." Her rapid overthrow became all at once an object lesson to most of us. Every dark cloud that appeared upon the international horizon seemed meant as a warning and impressed even our national pilots, who before 1870 would make no suitable provision against possible nights of darkness, of storm, and of danger. Our absolute unpreparedness for war apparently startled Mr. Cardwell, in whose calm judgement Mr. Gladstone trusted.

One of the world's very wisest men told his enormously rich friend that "He who has the best steel will have all the gold." But the modern Liberal thought himself wiser than this Greek philosopher. His view of the true military policy for England was, that as long as our coffers were full of gold we could at any moment of emergency obtain all we required for the defence of these Islands and of our Empire throughout the world.

"We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo! if we do,
We've got the men, we've got the ships, we've got the money too."

This popular music-hall ditty, though of a more recent date, expresses in plain words the faith which the Liberal Government, with Mr. Gladstone at its head, had wished the nation to believe in, and to hold by, previous to the year 1870.

But the great bulk of our educated and practical soldiers had already learnt from the lesson taught to Europe by the Franco-German War that we must change our Army System or cease to be a great Power. The old system of repairs to

the rickety coach in which our military administration had travelled for over half a century, would no longer suffice. Formerly, when its wreck seemed imminent, we were content to oil its creaking wheels and even at times to put in a new spoke here and there to keep them in working order. But most of our thoughtful soldiers had already realized that the machine had then reached a phase when it could be patched up no longer. The ironwork might possibly be reforged, but the whole of its body and superstructure was rotten and beyond the hope of any further effective repair.

After the Franco-German War the military system of the conquering power was carefully studied in all its details by those who wished to reform our land forces. We quickly realized that our Army was organized upon obsolete principles and that it had fallen behind the armies of the other great European Powers in efficiency, although proportionally its direct cost in money was far greater. The " base-rock " in the military system of all the great military Powers was, that every healthy male upon reaching manhood should be compelled to serve in the Army until he had become a well-trained soldier. But that was a measure which no political party with us would seriously contemplate. It was evident to all who studied the matter that the first practical step we should therefore take was to create an effective Army Reserve by the adoption of a comparatively short period of service with the Colours. Our national conditions rendered the formation of such a Reserve a peculiarly difficult matter, for unlike most of the other great nations we have large garrisons to furnish for those stations abroad which are the centres and bases for our Navy. Without them, our fleets could not keep the sea during war in these days of steam. India alone requires about 70,000 British soldiers

in profound peace, and practically, even during periods when no war was in the air, one half of our standing army must at all times be out of England. Until we adopt some form of obligatory military and naval service, the organization of our Army must always be, therefore, a far more complicated affair than it is in any other country. The Party then in office, as is customary with all parties, were very averse to any increase to our standing army.

I shall not attempt to enter upon any description of the new system that was proposed and adopted ; I wish rather to tell how it was effected. For home defence we had on paper a fairly large military force in the Regular Army, the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers. The Militia was then a badly organized and a very imperfectly instructed force. The Yeomanry, then only partially drilled and armed and equipped as cavalry, could be of little practical use in war, and the Volunteers, with no organization beyond that of the battalion, did not even shoot well. There was no cohesion between these differently organized military bodies, and in fact we had no military system at all. There were no arrangements prepared, no regulations laid down for placing in the field even a small army, much less any general plan for the mobilization of all our military forces for war purposes in any case of emergency. Many who had been in the Crimea, especially amongst the educated soldiers who had been selected for the staff towards the end of the war, fully realized all this. They deplored our military inefficiency and the absence of all system at the Horse Guards, then the headquarters of our Army. That wonderful institution, which had forgotten nothing and had learnt nothing since Waterloo, was sadly behind the time in every way. It was generally felt by all who carefully studied our

complicated military problem, that the Army could be most easily and economically augmented by making the Yeomanry, Militia and Volunteer forces really and in every sense part and parcel of it. This was eventually effected, and the history of our recent war in South Africa amply justifies the military wisdom of those who urged this measure upon the country.

Fortunately for the State, an extremely able officer, General Sir Patrick McDougall, had just been created head of our Reserve Forces. He had been commandant of our old Senior Department at Sandhurst, the precursor of our present Staff College, and he had recently been the adjutant-general of the Canadian Militia. He had brought to the latter thankless office a clear brain and a bright imagination untrammelled by obsolete notions upon military subjects. His capacity for work was very great, and his perfect and persuasive manners won much upon the Duke of Cambridge's susceptibilities. He was well aware of how thoroughly our antiquated military system required sweeping reforms to bring it up to a level with modern requirements, and he had also the courage of his opinions to say so, a quality which few of even our best senior officers then possessed. It was, however, in my opinion, the feeling that the Army Reformer had behind him a strong Minister of War who would protect him from the fierce enmity of the old school that gave him and others the courage to express their opinions openly. Had it not been for Mr. Cardwell's and Lord Northbrook's constant support and encouragement, those of us who were bold enough to advocate a thorough reorganization of our military system, would have been "*provided for*" in distant quarters of the British world "where no mention of us more should be heard."

The startling suddenness with which war had been declared by the King of Prussia, and the rapidity with which that declaration was followed by the invasion of France, by great victories won, and the stupendous results achieved as the German armies pressed westward was undreamt of outside of the Prussian War Office. All was done in a well-calculated sequence according to a long prepared and well understood plan. Not only the unfortunate victim, self-confident France, but all Europe was appalled as if by some terrific and unlooked for upheaval of nature. But to the educated soldier the rapid progress and great achievements of the Prussian army were a serious lesson. Military history had long taught him that nations content to rely on paper treaties rather than on their own well organized naval and military strength must fall eventually. Many able men here began even to doubt the sufficiency of that much vaunted protection which the Channel had so long been said to secure us.

Throughout the length and breadth of Britain men asked one another, "Are we safe really in these Islands? Or is it true, as our best soldiers assure us, that our military system is so obsolete, our Army organization so unsuited to modern requirements, that our power of resistance—as in the case of France recently—would utterly break down if tested by invasion?" All of us remembered the Great Duke of Wellington's celebrated letter to Sir John Burgoyne in 1849, upon the defenceless state of England, and in which he strove to arouse the nation and make it realize its danger.

In common with a number of our educated officers in 1871, I knew what was wrong in the Army and I did not hesitate to expose it. I preached reform in and out of season. Our Army Regulations were drawn in the interests

and for the convenience of the officer. He usually liked to do little, and all those who opposed every military change simply because it was change, defended him in doing that little. To study his profession, to become a master of his trade was the rôle of a very small knot of officers at that epoch. The great bulk of them—ninety-nine out of every hundred—liked the existing system of regimental promotion by purchase, slightly, very slightly, tempered by seniority. It was a simple process that prevented what the most stupid amongst us called favouritism, what the wise believed would be selection for merit, and it was the introduction of that sort of selection which the old school dreaded most. I took my stand on professional efficiency, and at once became very objectionable to the old generals and their following in the Army. Of the science of war, or of its recent practice in Europe, they understood next to nothing, and had a horror of the colonel or the general who, having studied the matter, set any store by it.

I was impatient and in a hurry: my nature would not brook the sapping of a regular siege: I wanted to assault the place at once, and I did so. The slow process of approach to the enemy's works that a politician versed in House of Commons procedure would have adopted seemed not only odious and cowardly, but to be unsuited to the object our Army Reformers aimed at. I soon found myself surrounded by the ablest soldiers of promise, all of whom were of my way of thinking as to the reforms required. The fact of my having seen a great deal of service, and of having lately led a difficult expedition from Canada into the Red River country, gave me some weight in bringing those reforms before the Army and before those in Parliament who dabbled in Army affairs.

But my best chance was that I found in office a great Minister at the head of Army matters; a clear-headed, logical-minded lawyer, though as absolutely ignorant of our Army and of war or its requirements as our civilian War Ministers always are.

The Army was then divided—but by no means in equal numbers—into two great sections, the old school and the new. In the former, by far the most numerous, was nearly every general officer and all the thoughtless in the Army. Our Commander-in-Chief then, was the Duke of Cambridge, a very clever Prince, who knew the Army thoroughly, and was looked up to and most justly liked by all ranks in it. Educated to believe in the Army as he found it, because it had been made by the Great Duke of Wellington, he honestly and firmly believed that what had been created by such a master of war, must be the best for all time. He had not, apparently, fully taken in the great changes which the system of universal military service had produced in European armies. He refused to believe in an Army Reserve, and honestly looked upon our endeavour to create one here as not only a mad folly, but as a crime against the State. No more loyal and devoted Englishman ever wore a red coat, but nothing would or could convince him that an Army Reserve in this country would be forthcoming when wanted. Recent experience, however, has proved how absolutely wrong the old school of officers were upon this point, and no man more than His Royal Highness has ever been thoroughly converted to modern ideas on this point.

I have mentioned this about a Royal Personage under whom I was long privileged to work, because I liked him more and more the better I knew him. Indeed no one who served for so many years on his staff could fail to love his

amiable qualities, or to admire his manliness of feeling. His honesty of purpose, loyalty to the Army, devotion to duty, sincere patriotism and deep and real attachment to his Queen and country pervaded all he did. I rejoice to have this opportunity for thus expressing my feelings regarding so great a Personage, because in the course of our long intimacy I had often to differ materially from his views upon Army matters and to propose changes in which, at the time, he did not always concur.

In looking back at my long connexion with the War Office, it is curiously interesting to note the out-of-date mode in which the command and administration of our Army was conducted when I first joined the headquarter staff. I was only a colonel in the adjutant-general's department, and my special work was the discipline of the Army. All important court martials came before me, and when officers "got into scrapes," I had to deal with them under the orders of the adjutant-general. If the matter was of a very serious nature, the adjutant-general laid it before the Commander-in-Chief. But such cases were few.

My work soon became more important, however, for Mr. Cardwell had determined to abolish the Purchase System and to reorganize the Army upon modern lines. The recent war between France and Germany woke up our thinking soldiers, but there were not many of them at that time in the superior ranks of our Army. It began at last to dawn upon the mind of even the taxpayer that our Army was as far behind that of France as that army had lately proved itself to be behind the army of Germany. Before the Franco-German War we had rather modelled ourselves upon the French army. In the Crimea we had found our military system in all its methods and phases to be hopelessly out of

tune with modern ideas, and were astonished when we realized that it was obsolete when compared with that of the army which the Emperor Louis Napoleon had sent into the field. We all felt, indeed we were certain, that our regimental officers possessed all the qualities required for leadership, and the pages of history equally convinced us that as men, as fighting animals, the British soldiers were certainly not inferior to the French rank and file. But yet, though all thoughtful men who had served before Sebastopol realized how much our whole Army System needed reform, none of any real importance was effected. The Franco-German struggle at last opened the eyes of our people to the real state of our out-of-date Army, and to our absolute military inefficiency.

Most of our old-fashioned, and may I venture to say, of our uneducated officers, refused to believe this. Their minds would accept no argument on the subject. An Army that had been organized by so great a man as Wellington, Napoleon's conqueror, must be, according to their traditions, the first in the world: to allow this Radical young Army school with all its new views—"made in Germany"—to touch that sacred Ark, would be worse than sacrilege, it would be national folly!

Those who then fought against Army Reform were thoroughly honest, but yet they constituted a serious danger to the Empire, for they had possession of all the high posts in the Army. To differ from them was to be declared a Radical, a positive danger to the State, and to be debarred from all chance of employment in the higher grades. I was then classed as one of those dangerous officers. To lessen our influence everything we did was painted in dark colours as the acts of fanatics who wished to destroy the old institu-

tion of the kingdom, even of Royalty itself. I felt this extremely, knowing in my heart how sincere, how even old-fashioned was the nature of my devotion to the Crown, and it did not make me love those the more who thus defamed me. Since then, especially in recent years, it has amused me to meet those who, at the time I refer to, were loudest in denouncing the Army Reserve that Mr. Cardwell was determined to build up. With the exception of the few keen-sighted men who knew how thoroughly our Army was in organization behind all the great armies of Europe, the bulk of our officers endorsed the denunciations fulminated against the proposed Army Reserve by those who then filled most of the high positions in our Army. The chief cry against it was, that whilst it would cost much, we could never count upon it when war came suddenly upon us. It is difficult to argue against a prophecy of this nature. The old-fashioned officer had been educated in the notion that it was essential he should see his men every day in order to be certain they were at hand. It was not our custom then to trust much in the honour and patriotism of our soldiers during peace, though we were certain they would follow us in action.

But the man of experience in the field as a Company officer had learnt differently. During days and nights and weeks and months passed in the field or in the trenches before Sebastopol amongst our very badly paid men, one learned to understand and to appreciate our comrades in the ranks. It is when you bivouac amongst them that you hear their views upon men and things most openly, for they are wont to argue plainly amongst themselves upon all matters connected with their daily life. They express opinions upon the character of their officers and about the

generals in command very freely, and as a rule with much justice. It is thus, and when leading them under fire, that you learn what fine manly fellows our privates are, and what is their standard of honour. It was thus I learnt to trust them, and—barring some black sheep who may at times be found even amongst the bishops of every Church—I prefer their code of honour to that of the tradesman or typical politician.

Our Rank and File are generally right in the estimate of their officer's worth and character. Whilst they hate the bully who does not enter into their feelings, and who treats them as if they had none, they have the most enthusiastic admiration for the officer who treats them kindly as well as justly, and above all, who in moments of extreme danger leads well in front. They quickly scent out the sneak and the poor of heart. In fact, taking him all in all, the British private, as I know him, is a fine noble fellow. The captain of a Company on active service whose heart is with his men, who never spares himself at their expense, who cheerfully shares their discomforts, who does his duty by them, and who, well in front, "leads them straight" in action, occupies a position of far more intense enjoyment and satisfaction than is to be found in any other position that life affords. At least such is my experience.

Holding these views I always scoffed at the warnings of those who would not believe in the honesty of our Reserve men, and I never failed to do all in my power to further the creation of that splendid body which so honestly, so cheerfully, rejoined the Colours for the late war in South Africa. Without it, what should we, with our absurdly small Army, have done then? And yet, I remember hearing it and the Reserve system generally decried and denounced publicly by a now distinguished soldier at a great dinner given in the City some twenty years ago.

CHAPTER XLII

Lord Airey, Lord Northbrook, Mr. Cardwell 1871–1873

WHEN I joined the Army headquarter staff, it was lodged in the time-honoured and beautiful building known as "The Horse Guards." But Mr. Cardwell had already determined to bring over the Commander-in-Chief and all the Army Staff, bag and baggage, to that unhealthy and curious congeries of houses in Pall Mall known as the War Office. The Commander-in-Chief resisted the proposed change, but to little purpose except to embitter the feeling which had long existed between the two establishments.

Tradition is a strong factor in all old armies like ours, but what is based upon most cherished memories has often to bend before the hard exigencies of new convictions and modern necessities. Pipe clay, stiff leather stocks, ramrod-like rigidity on parade, complicated drill and many other time-honoured practices have all had to make way for a new order of things, more practical, though possibly less theatrical. In 1870 it was evident that our parliamentary-governed Army could be ruled no longer upon its old lines, and all but the most stubborn of obstructionists soon recognized that fact. The best of our thinking soldiers had for some years realized that the Army was not on a level with modern military requirements, and that great changes were

necessary in its organization, education and training, and in the system upon which it was officered and commanded. This question was felt to be more pressing than any demand for domestic legislation, and the Cabinet faced it boldly. Mr. Gladstone had the utmost confidence in the wisdom and cool judgement of his old friend, Mr. Cardwell, and resolved to support whatever measures he recommended. Our ablest soldiers pronounced our military organization to be out of date, and the Army to be too small to fulfil the purposes for which it existed, and it was generally known that our soldiers, as well as our fortresses at home and abroad, were armed with obsolete weapons.

This was a terrible awakening to a man of Mr. Gladstone's essentially non-military bent of mind, and who wanted for domestic objects all the money he could obtain by ordinary taxation.

Our War Office, in previous years the dreary abode of overworked clerks and of despairing staff officers, soon became as full of life as any upturned beehive. Committees upon matters vital to the interests, to the very safety, of our empire, sat daily under Mr. Cardwell's inspiration. The modern school of military thought, for the first time in the Queen's reign, now obtained the ear of the public. Mr. Cardwell asked for and obtained the advice of the young school, sifted it, and finally adopted the most important of the measures they urged upon him. No British War Minister ever responded more readily to demands made upon him by his military advisers. He gave new life to our old Army, and according to my views of public life, to no one consequently in my day is the nation more deeply indebted.

The enthusiastic but thoughtful soldier wishes England to be provided, in the first place with the greatest and best

fleet in the world, and secondly with a thoroughly efficient army of sufficient strength for our military needs at home and abroad. But in times of profound peace he never hopes to obtain everything the Government in power should provide for the Army. When our old-fashioned castles, with their exposed walls, had been rendered useless by the invention of rifled guns, it was a long time before the most important of our fortresses were restored to their previous relative strength. We went on patching here, and squandering large sums there to little purpose, sooner than face the big question of entire reconstruction boldly. It is only the great military nations of Europe, poor though they may be in revenue, who have the sense to rearm their fighting men as a body, when the discovery of some new explosive or some new mechanism of musket or field gun warns them that it is essential for national safety to do so. Hitherto we have escaped from what might be the fatal disaster with which such a military policy might at any time overwhelm us. It is the natural tendency of all party political associations, such as our modern Cabinets have come to be, to postpone any full consideration of the nation's military needs in favour of the immediate, the direct interests of party politics. These latter are too often allowed to outweigh the necessity for any large expenditure upon the defence of our shores, or upon needed improvements in the fighting power and efficiency of our military forces. Every man now is somewhat of a politician, and the measures which party interests push to the front are understood by millions to whom our national military necessities do not appeal. Too often those necessities are only understood by our educated soldiers, a limited class who have little or no political weight in the country. Yet this information is doubtless recorded

in every foreign War Office. The large and increasing proportion of men with votes amongst us naturally tends to make political leaders pay more attention to domestic wants than to great questions of national defence that may never be brought practically home to all classes. As regards the possibility of war, "Not in our time, O Lord!" must often be the daily prayer of those who in office deliberately incur such possible, such awful, risks. Indeed, it is well known to the officers employed in Pall Mall that only in moments of more or less national panic can they hope to obtain what their professional education and knowledge warns them is absolutely necessary for the safety of the empire at home and abroad.

When I joined the Army headquarter staff in 1871, the Adjutant-General was Sir Richard, afterwards Lord Airey, the wisest and ablest soldier it was ever my lot to do business with. Indeed, I never knew any one in our Army who was better fitted for high military command. He received me at the Horse Guards with the courtly and reserved dignity which was so eminently characteristic of the man. His old-world and stately manners—that reminded me of my father—were most taking with all who had to work with him. Although anxious to bring on the young officers whom he thought best of, he was always distant with his subordinates until he knew them well. When, either at home or in the Crimea, he sent you on some particular duty, having told you what he wanted, it was not safe to ask him questions. His usual reply to the inquiring subordinate was: "You have your orders, come and tell me when you have carried them out." He used to say that it was most desirable to make young staff officers think for themselves, and that their very mistakes at first would be their best lessons for

the future. He had very justly great influence with the Duke of Cambridge, who, recognizing his ability, leaned much upon him. He knew the Army thoroughly, had commanded a Line battalion with the greatest credit, and had made it second to none. He had also served under Lord Hardinge as Military Secretary at the Horse Guards, and was consequently well acquainted generally with the office routine there. He was the only man whom I ever knew well who had personally done duty with the "Great Duke." I have already mentioned how thoroughly he was looked up to by all that was best in our Crimean army, and how ardently all who then knew him well had hoped to have seen him at its head. Thoroughly educated in the science, as well as conversant with the practice, of his profession, he could teach all ranks their duty. Cool, collected, never excited, he understood mankind and all its weaknesses, and, what is of great advantage to the highly-placed staff officer at Army headquarters, he was well connected, and was intimate with what is commonly known as "Society."

At my first interview with him upon my return from Canada, he was very complimentary in his remarks upon the manner in which the Red River Expedition had been planned and carried out. He fully appreciated its many peculiar difficulties, as his knowledge of the backwoods enabled him to estimate them at their proper value. In my many rides with him subsequently, he told me why it was he had at one time emigrated with his family to Ontario, intending to make it his home. His uncle, Colonel the Hon. Thomas Talbot, owned a great district of country in Canada about as large as an ordinary sized German principality, and had established himself upon it with an English household of servants, as a grand seigneur. I think he had served in the

Peninsula, at any rate had long been a personal friend of the great Duke of Wellington. Feeling he was growing old, and being lonely in his western home, he wrote to his nephew, Colonel Richard Airey, who had married a Talbot, and whose mother also had been one of that family, asking him to go to Canada and live with him as his heir. Sir Richard was then the Assistant Adjutant-General at the Horse Guards, and did not at all relish a proposal that would remove him from a profession he loved and in which he was, from his great ability and scientific military knowledge, bound to rise high in the event of war. But he was poor and had a family. He laid the matter before the Great Duke, knowing that his uncle had been one of his personal friends. The answer he received was, "You must go, you must go." He added, however, that he would give him a year's leave, and if he found at its expiration that a Canadian life did not suit him, he would re-employ him when he returned home. Many were the interesting stories Sir Richard told me of his life in the backwoods of Canada, but the repetition of them would be out of place here. Suffice it to say that for several reasons his uncle's establishment was not to his taste. He consequently returned home and became Military Secretary under General Lord Hardinge, who upon the Duke of Wellington's death had become Commander-in-Chief.

Lord Airey was the only educated soldier of great ability who was ever Adjutant-General in my time. He was a courtier, and knew how to avoid all argument upon subjects it would be unwise to discuss if he wished to exercise any effective or useful influence upon matters of most importance. He accepted the inevitable, and in order to hold his own where great principles were involved he pretended to agree generally with old-fashioned dogmas at which he

laughed in private. His career of usefulness in the Crimea had been unfortunately brought to an end in the following way.

Excessive overwork, want of food, of blankets and warm clothing, and above all things of firewood to cook with, had decimated our army before Sebastopol during the winter of 1854–5. After the battle of Inkerman it had become too small even for the defence of the Siege works we had already constructed, and we began to realize that we had originally accepted a share in the siege that was out of all proportion with the number of our men. It was to the military ignorance of our Cabinet in sending into the field so inadequately small and so very badly equipped an army we must attribute our misfortunes during the winter of 1854–5. To save their own credit they wanted a scapegoat upon whom to shift all responsibility for the sufferings to which they had, through ignorance, exposed our soldiers, and Sir Richard Airey, the Quartermaster-General in the field, was selected for that purpose. Some newspapers had held him up to public execration as responsible for all our misery, as being useless, ignorant of war and of how to wage it successfully. In order to obtain some plausible, some specious grounds for shifting the blame for all the miseries our soldiers had endured from their own shoulders to his, and to make him and other *military chiefs* in the field responsible for those miseries, the Cabinet, in the autumn of 1855, determined to send two special commissioners to the seat of war to inquire into the causes of our misfortunes during the previous winter and spring. Colonel Tulloch and Sir J. McNeill, M.D., were selected for the purpose, and upon reaching Balaclava in March, 1856, they at once began to collect evidence. They carried no weight in the Army, where neither of them had ever been

heard of before, and they were, in fact, unsuited in every respect for such a delicate task. Amongst others whom they examined they put a series of questions to Sir Colin Campbell. I remember his amusing description of those two gentlemen when speaking of them in India, as a "damned doctor and a colonel who had never been under any hotter fire than that of his own office fire in London." His indignation was expressed in strong terms when he mentioned the questions put to him—an experienced soldier—by men who knew nothing of war or of its difficulties.

The reports of their proceedings, as far as they went, are to be found amongst the Parliamentary papers of the time, and should be studied by all ambitious officers.

From Lord Airey I heard many an amusing description of what may be justly called, and what he considered to be, his "trial" before the Board of Generals who sat at Chelsea to consider the charges brought against him by his accusers. The "prosecution," however, broke down hopelessly, and ended in a fiasco that was almost comical. He told me that after he had delivered his "opening address," one of his traducers had such pains in his stomach he would never again appear before the Board, and that the other poor man, also refusing to attend, was heard of no more! The Army laughed loudly at this result, but as I have said above, the fact that these accusations had been listened to by the Government of the day seemed to have robbed Lord Airey of all his old military zeal, and as far as I could judge he was never the same man again. Thenceforth he seemed to regard his duties as mere routine matters to be performed with skill and care; but enthusiasm entered no more into his daily discharge of them. He apparently resented the disgrace that had been so unjustly put upon him, and the

unwarranted injury to his reputation as a soldier that had been done him by those who ought to have been the first to defend him. He said, in talking this over with me years afterwards, that the Government of the day had from cowardice given way to the clamour raised against him in order to screen their own shortcomings. He told me that when brought home to answer these absurd charges, he was warned by influential friends he might expect the treatment meted out to Admiral Byng just a century before.

I had joined the Quartermaster-General's staff soon after the fall of Sebastopol, and I can speak from personal knowledge of the esteem he was then held in by all who were in daily contact with him.

When I first joined the Horse Guards staff, I rode much with him. Almost every fine Sunday, when we were both in town, we wandered about the commons near London. He knew every field where we could have a gallop, and knew where we could best negotiate each fence. He was a first rate horseman, and loved the animals he rode. Ever since my first wound—when I was shot through the thigh—I can grip my saddle with one leg only, and should my horse swerve at a fence I have often much difficulty in keeping my seat. He knew this, and my efforts to follow his lead amused him. He was the most charming and instructive of companions, understanding Society and the world generally better than most men. In manners he was a thorough courtier, and often laughed at himself for being so. I realized from his manner when talking to me about Army matters that I was hated in certain quarters because of my opinions upon all points of military organization, and because I alone of those in office at the Horse Guards would not follow the dictates of my military superiors, and pre-

sumed to express openly my own views to Mr. Cardwell at War Office meetings. This conduct on my part was, he said, looked upon as a species of high treason. Because I held strong views upon the great military value of our Auxiliary Forces, and of the Volunteers especially, I was looked upon as a sort of traitor to the old traditions of our Army. According to the reasoning of our out-of-date Army school, such opinions could only be entertained by a Radical, that most dangerous of all beings according to its notions; and the fact that I soon became intimate with Mr. Cardwell confirmed many in this opinion, as that Minister was known to be bent upon Army Reform.

I felt such a reform to be absolutely necessary if our Army was to be converted into an efficient fighting force, and rejoiced to find that Mr. Cardwell took me somewhat into his confidence. But I was only one of several then in the War Office who did their best to help him in the most difficult task that any British War Minister has ever had to tackle.

In the first place, the Under-Secretary of State for War, Lord Northbrook, was thoroughly imbued with the conviction that our Army, in its organization and methods, was far behind the best European armies. I need not, indeed it would be unbecoming in me to dwell upon his ability, his power of work, his military intuition, the fearless determination with which he approached all questions of Army Reform, and the amount of study he had bestowed upon the organization of foreign armies. He supported Mr. Cardwell in all his proposed reforms, and convinced him of others that were still required. He was a thorough-going man of business, and a statesman who examined for himself every new proposal made by the ardent young Army Reformers then around him. He was the mainstay of the new English

Army school, which the Franco-German war had recently called into existence. He judged its teachings and its proposals on their own merits, and when he adopted them, it was because he believed in them, and not from that love of change for change's sake, with which crime many then charged our Army Reformers. The book of our military system—if it deserved to be called a "system"—was open before him, and all the old officers of whom the Army Head-Quarters Staff then chiefly consisted, were at hand to expound and praise its written and unwritten regulations.

Never having had any turn for party politics, it concerned me little whether I was classed as Tory, Liberal, or destructive Radical, and it amused me to hear men describe me as belonging to the last named party. I had been brought up in what I may style the strict sect of Church and State Toryism, but I could not be an obstructive Tory in military matters, for I knew too well that our Army was absolutely behind the age in every way.

Any one who understands the practical working of our Constitution, knows that there is, and will always be, a point beyond which annual Army expenditure must not be permanently increased. For the time being we had practically nearly reached that point already. To have hoped, therefore, that any Administration would allow us to keep on foot during peace a standing army of sufficient strength to have given us, for instance, a field army such as that we sent to South Africa in 1899–1900, would have been the dream of a visionary. But it was no easy matter to make the old-fashioned officer realize this. He refused to believe in an Army Reserve, and asserted that it would not be forthcoming when most urgently wanted. He would not accept the assurance that the only system under which we could ever

hope to have a military force sufficient for our wants, and that would always be available for sudden emergencies, was that which would supply us with a large Reserve of trained soldiers, who, whilst living chiefly on the wages they earned as civilians in time of peace, should be bound by a daily retaining fee to come out for military duty whenever the State required their services. Our recent Boer War has shown us how absolutely essential that system is for us as a nation.

Whilst Mr. Cardwell was in office I enjoyed my work at Army Headquarters. It was most interesting, and I imagined I was of use there. I certainly worked hard, and by the united efforts of others about me, who also recognized the necessity of Army Reform, many most useful changes in organization, drill and equipment were effected. But the opposition in Parliament, in Society, and even in the Army itself to any radical change in our out of date Army organization, was enormous. The old Tory officer would listen patiently to no proposals on the subject, and short of starting a new Army upon entirely new principles, I often despaired of Mr. Cardwell being able to carry through Parliament the useful military reforms he aimed at. This strong Conservative dislike to change was shared by our officers generally, and defended by their kinsfolk and friends in Parliament. This was so strong a castle of obstruction, that many believed it could only be carried by a *coup de main*, and for that Mr. Cardwell was I know prepared, if at the last moment he found himself "cornered." Once or twice it was thought that Mr. Gladstone seemed inclined to give in: he never fully understood the question in all its bearings, and it was certainly in every sense uncongenial to his mind: it did not enter into his philosophy. But without

any attempt to master its details, he adopted Mr. Cardwell's costly proposal to abolish the long-established Army system of "purchase" as the foremost object of his policy at the moment. This proposal was so strenuously opposed by all the Conservative and richer classes, that I assumed at the time—whether rightly or wrongly I know not—he must have thought it could not therefore fail to be appreciated generally by his own followers. Did not his Radical friends hail with pleasure every enactment that was odious to the better classes? Surely, therefore, this abolition of purchase would be generally regarded as a great Radical victory!

There is no Statesman for whose memory I entertain a greater regard than I do for that of Mr. Cardwell. And no public man I have known was ever more misunderstood except by the soldiers he had to work with. Most cultivated by taste and education, he possessed a charm for all who knew him well. Soft hearted, amiable and full of consideration for those who were worthy of it, no man knew better how to hold his own against unfair pressure. Always patient in listening to the views of others, calm and civil and guardedly polite to those who differed with him, he did not easily alter the resolutions he had arrived at, or the opinions he had formed after he had fully grasped any subject. Of a legal turn of mind, he weighed the conflicting convictions of those who were entitled to express them upon Army matters. No judge was ever in a more difficult position than he found himself about the time I joined the head-quarter staff of the Army in 1871. The points he had to decide, intricate even for the initiated, were upon a great subject that had never before come within the limit of his political considerations. The nature of the so-called canals in Mars had previously entered as little into his studies, or

had as little occupied his thoughts, as had the military systems of Europe, and least of all that of England. The subject was not congenial to his tastes, and there was nothing in common between him and the fighting British soldier. The ambitions, the prospects, the feelings and prejudices of our officers were not known to him. He did not himself belong to what I may call a military family, and until he became Secretary of State for War he could have heard little intelligent discussion upon Army matters. He had of course gathered from newspapers, during the progress of the 1870 war, that the German army was a magnificently designed and well built machine for enforcing the will of the nation and for the protection of its national territory. He may have seen comparisons made in the European press between it and the old-fashioned British Army. Many public lectures even had been given by English officers in which our military shortcomings had been fully set forth. Some of our most highly educated soldiers had pronounced our organization to be entirely obsolete, our drill to be much the same as it was in the days of Sir John Moore, and in fact, our Army little better than an anachronism in the days of universal service, of the breech-loader and of long-ranging rifled guns.

The most intelligent of our young officers, and a few even of the ablest seniors, called loudly for reforms, and the press in general backed them up and thus obtained a hearing in Parliament for the proposals they could not otherwise have hoped for.

Mr. Cardwell's private secretary was an old and highly esteemed comrade of mine, then Major, now General, Sir Robert Biddulph. A very able man, well read upon all military subjects, who had seen much active service in the

Crimea, during the Indian Mutiny and in China, he was a man who thought, and was certainly one of the best soldiers all round I ever knew. He understood our Army thoroughly, and was fully alive to its backwardness in all that goes to make up military efficiency. He was of the utmost use to Mr. Cardwell at a time when that great War Minister had determined to abolish the Purchase System, to reform the Army and bring it up to a level with modern requirements. The Secretary of State for War who has a soldier of such ability and experience as his private secretary is indeed fortunate, whilst he who has a civilian or a second rate officer in that capacity is just the reverse. Indeed the inferior soldier is the more dangerous man in that position, because he is likely to have weight with his civilian master and to lead him astray upon military points, whereas no one suspects the civilian private secretary of knowing more about Army matters than the War Minister does himself.

I often went then to the House of Commons to listen to the debates on this subject, and to be at hand in case Mr. Cardwell should want information upon any unexpected point that might be sprung upon him by a soldier Member with which he might not happen to be fully acquainted. It was interesting for me as a party-politics hater to watch the shifts and ruses resorted to by those who objected to Mr. Cardwell's proposed changes. Their arguments, though sometimes flimsy, were specious, and often amusing. But Mr. Cardwell had so thoroughly absorbed the ins and outs of all the important points bearing upon the question, that he seldom had recourse to my aid upon such occasions. Personally I became much attached to him, as I think all were who knew him well. I always thought he keenly felt the unmerited, the unworthy, abuse that was heaped upon him

by what is commonly known as "Society." Mothers with stupid soldier sons denounced him as bent upon destroying the Army which our Great Duke had bequeathed us. The way in which he was generally held up to derision was not creditable to the intelligence of those concerned. The foreigner who did not know how absolutely ignorant society was upon Army matters, might have imagined that Mr. Cardwell had some personal interest in the measures he carried out: else why should he pursue a line of policy that all the Field-Marshals and old Generals denounced—including even Indian generals, who knew but little of our Army?

It cannot be too much impressed upon those who are anxious for information upon the subject, that in all Mr. Cardwell did then, he acted, not upon political, but upon purely and essentially national and military grounds. He soon came to realize that we could not hope to have a thoroughly efficient Army as long as the illogical Purchase System was allowed to bar the way to all useful Army reforms. Indeed, the first, the biggest and most serious of all our Army fights at this period was over its "abolition." As a system, it was not only the most objectionable and glaring of our military anachronisms, but in times of peace it blocked every avenue to the advancement of merit. Its abolition was opposed with all the ignorance so often displayed by our soldiers in Parliament. My old campaigning chum, the Hon. Augustus Anson, a man of great intelligence and a first rate soldier, was one of those who opposed its abolition to the bitter end. He was strenuously helped by his very able brother-in-law, the present Lord Wemyss, by almost all the old retired Army officers, and by a large majority of those still serving. Fortunately for the Army it was carried through Parliament successfully, and the great principle of

selection for all promotions soon followed. This was Mr. Cardwell's first military achievement, and it merits the remembrance and gratitude of all soldiers and of every one who desires to see our Army efficient.

This measure cost the country a large lump sum of money, and it imposed a considerable increase in annual Army expenditure for many years afterwards. And yet, it was planned and successfully carried out by the most economical of Governments, and by about the greatest economy-loving member in that Government, because he felt assured that until the Army was repurchased, as it were, from the officers who had bought their positions in its ranks, it never could be made the thoroughly efficient force the nation wanted.

Our Intelligence Department at that time possessed several remarkable men who devoted their best energies to help forward Army Reform. Of them no one worked to better advantage or with greater zeal than my old valued friend and loyal comrade Captain T. Jessop, of the Scots Greys. An able, clever man all round, full of energy and of bright, modern views. A good, hard-working man of business—that best of qualifications for a staff officer—free from prejudice and of a most liberal turn of mind. Another was Captain Evelyn Baring, now Lord Cromer, the well-known British representative, I must not say ruler, in Egypt. He was an indefatigable worker, and one of the very ablest, strongest and most determined men I ever knew or did business with. He helped materially in carrying out many of our most needed Army Reforms at the time I write of.

Many other able soldiers helped Lord Cardwell in his difficult task, amongst whom were Sir Patrick MacDougall, Sir George Colley, Sir Edward Bulwer, Sir Henry Brackenbury, and Sir Frederick Maurice. In all possible ways they

helped forward the new military system Mr. Cardwell was toiling to create. But all this opposition in Parliament and elsewhere to Mr. Cardwell's proposed changes brought down much obloquy upon the Government, and several of its supporters would, I think, at one time have gladly seen the matter dropped.

I have always believed that the mental strain thus imposed upon Mr. Cardwell was too great for him, and that the brain disease from which he died some years afterwards was the result of the worry, work, abuse and anxiety he then underwent at the hands of men who did not understand modern warfare or its requirements. I hope we shall never forget that it is to his courage, firmness and wisdom we owe our present Army. It is by no means what it might have been and what it still requires to be made, but let the reader imagine, if he can, how we could have met the recent Boer invasion of our colonies if Mr. Cardwell had never reformed our Army and made it even as good as it is. He it was who wisely provided us with the reserve of trained soldiers and the large army of trained auxiliary forces which enabled us to bring that strangely long drawn out war to a fairly successful issue.

CHAPTER XLIII

The Ashantee War of 1873-4

THE story of my campaign against Ashantee in 1873-4, is, for many reasons, full of interest for me, and perhaps my readers may find some pleasure in the following brief description of it.

I shall make no attempt to relate the history of our early relations with Ashantee. It would be of little interest, and would certainly neither redound to the credit of our arms nor to the intelligence of our home Ministers. It is not easy to define the immediate cause of every war we have waged on the West Coast of Africa. We may, however, truthfully assert that most of them grew out of our abolition of the Slave Trade. As the King of Ashantee's revenue, which had been considerable, was chiefly derived from the sale of slaves captured in his frequent wars, he was naturally furious with us for having thus deprived him of his market for them. This had made him in the years immediately preceding our war all the more anxious to secure Elmina or some other place on the sea where he could in safety sell his prisoners to slave-owning states.

The history of all our dealings with the Ashantees tells us that whenever our Governor of the Gold Coast made any move that showed signs of weakness, trouble with Koomassee invariably followed. The cowardly policy we

pursued in 1807 led to the Ashantee invasion of 1811: the Ashantee inroad in 1823 was the result of our buying off that enemy in 1817, and the fact that we did not attempt to avenge Sir Charles MacCarthy's defeat in 1824, had brought the enemy to the very walls of our coast forts.

As we made no attempt to take vengeance for this overwhelming defeat, the Koomassee Sovereign and his warlike people naturally assumed we were afraid of them. Was not the possession of our general's skull amongst their war trophies, upon which the King swore his most solemn oaths, a lasting evidence that we dared not meet them again in battle? King Koffee Kalcali—their king in 1873—brought up to consider himself the greatest of monarchs and his soldiers irresistible—believed he could afford to treat us with contempt, and even to ill-use and murder our native subjects.

When the Ashantees had invaded our territory in 1863 and attacked the tribes under our protection, we unwisely stationed a West Indian regiment at Prahsu for several months. The operations, badly devised and worse executed, ended in terrible sickness and loss of life before we had made any useful impression upon the enemy. The details of this discreditable failure so horrified the English world at the time, that the Government—held responsible for it—was nearly turned out of office in consequence. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, ten years later, should have dreaded what our projected expedition might have in store for them.

Early in 1873 a mail steamer from the Gold Coast brought home the alarming news that an Ashantee army of about 12,000 soldiers, under the command of Prince Menza, King

Koffee's brother, had crossed the Prah in January to invade and lay waste our protectorate.[1] It was said to be the largest army that had ever left Koomassee. Our West Coast authorities do not seem to have attached much importance to this event, and consequently little was done in the way of military preparations to meet the impending attack until about the middle of the year. Our governor then reported the enemy to be within twenty-four hours' march of Cape Coast Castle, and that the Fantee population could not be induced to face them. In fact, the invaders were allowed to remain for about half the year in undisturbed possession of the greater part of our protectorate. Besides the Gold Coast towns we only held Dunquah, on the Prahsu-Koomassee road, which we had occupied with some Houssas early that year, and where we had ordered the fighting men of the native tribes to assemble. But in April the latter were defeated, and could never afterwards be induced to meet their old enemies, although King Koffee's army made little use of the victory. It did not attempt to approach Cape Coast Castle, but moved towards Elmina, covering as it advanced a large area in order to find food, which is never plentiful in that forest country.

We had recently acquired Elmina from the Dutch, but its king, who was anti-English, had sworn his " great oath " to join the Ashantee invaders when they reached his territory, and other neighbouring potentates were said to have followed his example. Although the enemy's march was slow and deliberate, Elmina was soon invested. Fortunately for England, it was then held by a small party of marines, bluejackets, and West Indian soldiers under

[1] This army was said to have taken five days in crossing the Prah, having but two ferry boats that carried only thirty men each.

Colonel Festing of the Royal Marines, and Lieutenant Wells of the Royal Navy. With this feeble garrison they drove back the enemy with loss in June, 1873, and the place was saved. Death overtook the gallant Wells at his post, and of the marine garrison twenty-seven died, and the fever-stricken remainder had to be sent home.

Throughout this war Colonel Festing did the State right good service. A brave gentleman, a cool and daring soldier, he inspired general confidence, and it was by his skilful use of the small force at his disposal that we were able to hold our own both at Elmina and at Cape Coast Castle throughout the summer and autumn of 1873. He was well supported by the senior naval officer of the station, Captain Fremantle, a man of indefatigable energy, great experience and much ability, if I may venture to use such terms in relation to one who is now a distinguished Admiral of the Fleet.

After their repulse the Ashantee army fell back to a position some ten miles inland, near Mampon, and to the north-west of Cape Coast Castle. Its presence there, however, served to keep the protectorate in a constant state of alarm, for no one could say when the whole Ashantee nation might not swoop down upon our coast settlements. Indeed, when they did attack our Fantee levies in the following June, those cowards fled with their women and children to Cape Coast Castle for protection.

In September the Administrator of the Gold Coast urged Colonel Festing to attack the enemy's camp at Mampon without waiting for reinforcements from home. Amongst other reasons for pressing this course upon him, it was alleged that our inaction was injurious to our fighting reputation amongst our own tribes. A weak man might

have given way against his better judgement to such an appeal from a civil governor, but Colonel Festing wisely refused to undertake any such risky operation.

As we made no move the invaders grew bolder, until in June, 1873, as already related, they even ventured to attack Elmina. Though effectively repulsed in the attempt, they showed no signs of retiring within their own frontiers. They merely fell back to take up a threatening position further inland. In this condition of affairs it became very evident to Lord Kimberley that all hope of making any definite and lasting peace with the Ashantee king until his army had been utterly defeated was merely the wild dream of timid men, who neither understood the haughty character of the Ashantee people nor the abject cowardice of the Fantees, who constituted the Queen's subjects in the "protectorate."

As might be expected from a very warlike, proud and barbarous people, our having left them unpunished for their invasion of our territory was attributed to cowardice. Such pusillanimous conduct caused them to believe we were afraid of so great a king and of so great a nation.

Such a condition of things always means war sooner or later, but when the nature of the Gold Coast climate is remembered it is easy to understand why the home Government elected to postpone making it as long as possible. But at the same time, it must, I think, be admitted as a broad fact that we have generally owed our troubles in those regions to the halting, changeable and timid policy—dictated from Downing Street—that we followed in dealing with this nation of warriors. Lord Kimberley, then Minister for the Colonies, who knew the history of our former relations with that formidable military power,

now insisted upon prompt measures being taken to put an end once and for ever to this intolerable condition of affairs. Working conjointly with Mr. Cardwell—a former Colonial Minister who thoroughly understood the Gold Coast history—they decided to make a soldier Governor of our Gold Coast territory.

Mr. Cardwell had in confidence already informed me that he would like me to go there should it be determined to undertake active operations against the invading Ashantees. In numerous Blue Books, and in piles of confidential correspondence between local governors and the Colonial Office, I had consequently made a careful study of the subject, and had perused all the available works which bore upon the geography and history of the region in question. I there learnt that military operations upon the Gold Coast cannot be begun with safety until about the end of November or the beginning of December, nor can they be prolonged without inordinate risk much beyond the end of February. In other words, for whatever eventualities I might deem it essential to provide, my operations must be planned so as to fit well within those three months. It required some fertility of imagination to make any useful forecast as to the development of a problem in which the idiosyncrasies of an absolute negro ruler, like the King of Ashantee, formed an important factor. I submitted privately to Mr. Cardwell the rough outline of a military scheme which if vigorously carried out would, I believed, enable us to destroy the military power of the Ashantees, and thereby secure peace to the people of our West Coast settlements for at least a long period. The rough outline of the scheme was, that I should proceed there as soon as possible and assume the government of all

our settlements in that part of the world; that I should be allowed to take with me a number of carefully selected officers for the purpose of raising an efficient native force, if that were possible, and that with it I should do my best to drive back the Ashantee invaders beyond the River Prah and secure our possessions from future attack. But, I added, that all the information I had gathered on the subject made me think it would be impossible to accomplish what was wanted without the assistance of white troops, as it was tolerably evident the Fantees would not face their old and dreaded enemies the Ashantees unless thus backed up. I said the Government might rely on it that I would do my best to avoid the terrible necessity of having to employ our soldiers in such a climate, but that I deemed it to be absolutely essential to have two [1] first rate battalions told off and specially equipped for a campaign beyond the Prah should I send home to say I could not fulfil my mission without their help.

My plan was to make a good road to the Prah River and erect suitable shelters for those white battalions at selected halting places along it: that, when everything was ready, I should land them, and having collected my fighting forces on that river push forward the remaining seventy or eighty miles to Koomassee with all speed, and if possible make peace there with King Koffee. If he would not do this, I would destroy his palaces, burn his capital and lay waste his country as well as I could, and with the least possible delay send back the British troops to their transports, which I should have waiting for them on the coast.

My study of our past relations with the Ashantees drove

[1] I subsequently increased this number to three battalions which the Government agreed to.

home into my mind the conviction that until we had utterly defeated their army and taken Koomassee, we should never have any assured peace in our West African settlements. Until we had actually marched an army into Koomassee, the natives of all tribes and races would continue to believe that if we dared to push forward beyond the River Prah we should be exterminated. This belief did exist, and was the chief cause of my subsequent difficulty in obtaining carriers who would work beyond that river. All the West African natives far and near believed the Ashantees to be irresistible in battle, and I confess they found reason for that belief in the history of all our previous dealings with Koomassee and its rulers. It is always a source of serious danger to have on your frontiers a fighting race of savages imbued with this firm belief in their own irresistible strength. In this instance, that axiom was strengthened by our having recently allowed the Ashantees to cross into our protectorate and to kill or carry off into slavery the inhabitants of whole villages.

Accustomed to the bush, in which they could move about as they liked, it never seems to have occurred to the illogical mind of the Ashantees that we could do so equally well if only we had the courage to face them. The dark, thick and tangled forest in which they lived was to them but as the Surrey Commons might be to us, a species of country to be manœuvred through as an ordinary military exercise. They consequently attributed our repugnance to penetrate its recesses to our fear of so redoubtable an enemy. I soon found that this belief was not confined to those who had lived beyond the Prah, but was freely shared by all the kings and people of our protectorate.

Since Sir Charles MacCarthy's defeat in 1823, all punitive

attacks upon recalcitrant native rulers had devolved almost exclusively upon our ships of war. These little expeditions on the West Coast were liked by the officers and ships' crews, and the Navy had come to regard them as exclusively their business.

In all local troubles with the coast chiefs or kings whose towns could be reached by our ships' guns, the usual course was as follows: The matter was reported by the governor to the senior naval officer, and, as a punitive measure, he was requested to open fire upon the collection of mud huts which constituted the capital of the recalcitrant potentate. This he at once proceeded to do. It was a simple operation; the town named was quickly and easily reduced to ashes by our shells, and the inhabitants fled for safety to the neighbouring bush. When we had thus, as it was understood, vindicated the offended honour of England, our ships of war disappeared, and the villagers returned to their burnt homes to bury those who had been killed and to restore the thatched roofs of their mud houses. It was a cheap, rough-and-ready mode of bringing home for the moment to the minds of all negro rulers on the coast the greatness of the White Sovereign beyond the ocean who claimed them as her subjects. The penalty inflicted was trifling, and in a few weeks nothing remained to show that the English had punished the offending chief. A full report of the proceedings was then forwarded to the Admiralty in a despatch, and "My Lords" expressed their unqualified approval of the way in which the affair had been disposed of. The whole performance was, in fact, eminently futile, and as it probably involved killing some women and children, it was cruel also.

Remembering these facts it was but natural that some

naval officers should have regretted deeply that the settlement of our Ashantee difficulty should not have been left entirely to the Admiralty. There was also perhaps another reason why my appointment should not find favour there. The Colonial Office had already sent out Captain Glover, R.N., to the valley of the River Volta with a sort of roving commission, in the hope that his operations there might bring the Ashantee King to reason. It was not, therefore, far-fetched to imagine that naval officers might think it was scarcely fair to Captain Glover to call in a soldier before his scheme had been given a trial, and to entrust that soldier with the supreme direction of all the military and political affairs in the coming war.

Captain Glover had left England in August, 1873, for our territory in the Volta Basin. Boundaries in those regions were then very undefined, indeed, as far as I know, the only actual surveys of any portion of our protectorate are those made by the officers who went with me to Koomassee. The most important paragraph of Captain Glover's instructions—as I understood them—was, that "the great object of his mission was to create such a diversion on the flank and rear of the Ashantees as might force them to retreat from the protectorate, or at all events to so far harass and alarm them as to enable an attack to be made on them in front with better prospect of success." [1]

But notwithstanding that paragraph in his instructions it always seemed to me that, looking far ahead beyond that "great object," his chief aspiration was to open out a new, an easy route for trade into the interior of Africa

[1] "Colonial Office Instructions of August 18 to Captain Glover as our Special Commissioner to the friendly native chiefs in the eastern districts of the Protected Territories near and adjacent to our Settlements on the Gold Coast."

by the hitherto unexplored Volta Valley. It was a grand idea well worthy of so far-seeing, so determined an explorer, and I regret beyond measure that it has never been seriously undertaken. But it was not the object of the mission upon which I was sent. I thought then, and still believe, that until I had sent him positive orders to cross the Prah on January 15 and to march upon Koomassee with all the forces at his disposal, he had regarded the destruction of the Ashantee military power as a mere episode in the much grander and more ambitious scheme he had always before him. But that scheme would require some years to carry out, whereas the object of my mission was definite, namely, to secure peace to our protectorate by the destruction of the Ashantee military power before the next unhealthy season had set in.

On August 13 there was a meeting at the War Office of Ministers and high military and naval authorities. I was sent for and asked if, with my knowledge of affairs upon the Gold Coast, I would undertake the direction of the civil and military affairs there. I was told, that if I said "yes," I should not be expected to remain there after I had settled matters with King Koffee Kalcali. I at once assented—Heavens, with what internal joy I did so! A messenger was forthwith sent to Osborne to obtain Her Majesty's consent, and two days later it was announced in all the London papers that I was to leave for West Africa immediately. The Cabinet were, I think, anxious to make publicly known their determination to deal quickly and drastically with this Ashantee question, and to let the world learn that they were already busy in preparing for war should it be forced upon them. Other somewhat similar meetings took place subsequently in

Mr. Cardwell's room. They interested me much, for I had never before heard Ministers discuss amongst themselves questions of Imperial policy. Those whom I then heard debate the serious question of whether a military force should or should not be sent to the Gold Coast, were able and experienced statesmen. I did not expect them to know much of war, or of its difficulties, from a military point of view, but I did imagine there would have been a unanimity of opinion as to the evident necessity for going to war. At one of these meetings, a Minister who was present, put several pertinent questions, which his colleague of the Colonial Office answered, I thought, in a somewhat sharp tone of voice. I may have been wrong, but I fancied that the questions reflected naval sentiment at the Admiralty. At least that was my impression at the time.

Some questions and answers passed between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and another Minister who was present as to what it was hoped or intended to do under many contingencies. Lord Kimberley's temper became apparently somewhat nettled under his colleague's cross-examination until at last, in reply to some inquiry, he thumped the table in front of him and said in a determined voice, "Either this expedition comes off or I cease to be Colonial Minister." This emphatic reply astonished me not a little, but it had what I presume was its intended effect, for it ended the discussion, and the despatch of the expedition was agreed to.

Mr. Cardwell, who did not seem to enjoy this somewhat open exchange of views between colleagues, brought the meeting to a close, pouring oil upon the troubled waters with that mild determination of manner which was a prom-

inent feature in his character. The die was cast, and the general plan of campaign was to be on the lines I had proposed. I was to have the invaluable advantage of being not only Military Chief, but also governor of the territories which constituted or bordered upon the seat of war. Upon the general line of policy to be followed I received fairly clear instructions, but much was wisely left to my discretion. The fact that the Government thus trusted me I attributed to Mr. Cardwell's experience as Colonial Minister in a former Administration, which had taught him the desirability of concentrating in one man's hands both the civil and military power when war is imminent in any of our distant possessions.

To compare a small with a great affair upon such a point, let the reader contrast the history of Sir John Moore's remarkable campaign in Spain with the history of this little war. The comparison will illustrate clearly how marked is the advantage to the nation when the home Government is wise enough to entrust the Commander in the field with the responsibility of what I may call the local diplomacy of the war as well as with the direction of the military operations undertaken to secure the great national objects aimed at.

Our history teems with useful warnings upon this point, as for instance in the Low Countries, where the Dutch Deputies with Marlborough's army were allowed to influence and in some instance to control the plans and movements of that great general. The story of those two wars warns us never again to send a civilian commissioner into the theatre of war to exercise any authority over the general commanding the troops employed.

In the official letter informing me that I had been selected

to command the forces and to assume the civil administration of the Gold Coast, Mr. Cardwell wound up by impressing upon me that "nothing but a conviction of necessity would induce Her Majesty's Government to engage in any operations involving the possibility of its requiring the service of Europeans at the Gold Coast."

Upon me was thus thrown the responsibility of forming an opinion on the spot whether the necessities of the position did or did not require the employment of British troops in the coming campaign, whilst the Cabinet reserved to itself the final decision of whether they would or would not furnish such troops if I asked for them.

I think it might be safely asserted that at the beginning of 1873 not five per cent. of the English people had ever heard of the Ashantee kingdom. I might as truthfully add, that out of every thousand of such enlightened beings, very few indeed knew much about its geography or its history. The world in general had a sort of vague undefined notion that in the days when we recognized domestic slavery in our colonies its king dealt largely in human flesh with the slave traders: and furthermore, that the Ashantee nation was known to be the most warlike in the region, and had not hesitated upon several occasions to invade the white man's territory, and even to attack his fortified castles which had been erected in the slave-dealers' interests. The Dutch and the Portuguese held some of these castles. Elmina, formerly Dutch, had recently become British, a circumstance which many ignorantly thought had brought about this war. To the English of 1873 who knew something more of West Africa than what is learnt from school geography, the Ashantees were associated with the serious defeat they had inflicted upon us about fifteen

miles inland just half a century before, as already mentioned. Upon that occasion our native allies bolted soon after the first volley, and the native army we had trusted to stem the Ashantee invasion followed their example, leaving to his fate their general, who was also the governor of our Cape Coast possessions.

Whilst our preparations for this campaign were in progress, I heard many say, "Why not abandon the Gold Coast altogether? It can be no longer worth our while to spend money upon a country whose climate is deadly to us and which must always be a source of worry and danger?"

Peace-loving as Lord Kimberley undoubtedly was, he took no such small churchwarden view of our Imperial responsibilities, and I presume he had induced Mr. Gladstone to see the matter in a similar light. Both he and Mr. Cardwell were devoted to peace, but neither would, according to my estimate of their characters, have shrunk from war when it had become in their opinion a national necessity. In this instance both were satisfied that we could not avoid it with any shred of national dignity, nor with any honest care for the future. Lord Kimberley, though a very able man and a strong Colonial Minister, was a great talker. His idea of a conversation upon an important business resolved itself into a long and able monologue. When he had exhausted the subject—and sometimes his listener also—he would shake him by the hand, say the conversation (!) had been most useful and instructive, and that he was much obliged for the interview.

How shall I describe Mr. Cardwell, the greatest Minister I ever served with at the War Office? He was the only civilian Secretary of State I ever knew who understood

what military administration meant, or who had any fixed ideas of the principles upon which an army should be organized for rapid mobilization. It was a pleasure to work with so able a statesman, and one could always trust him implicitly. To him we owe the abolition of purchase and the establishment of our present military system. Knowing what a large army that system recently enabled us to send to South Africa, I feel we can never as a nation be sufficiently grateful to his memory. But he never could have carried out his reforms in the face of the howling opposition they met with from what is commonly known as "society," and also from the Army with its thousand ramifications amongst the "better classes," had it not been that Mr. Gladstone reposed implicit confidence in the wisdom and discretion of his old and firm friend, Edward Cardwell. To Mr. Gladstone all Army questions were uncongenial. But he understood in a very general way that the system which allowed, say, a stupid major to jump over the head of a clever senior because the former could, and the latter could not, afford to pay a few thousand pounds for the promotion, must be an absurdity, an injustice to individuals and such a serious injury to the State that it could not be defended with any show of reason. But if he would not study Army questions himself, he believed so thoroughly in his friend's good sense, calm and logical judgement, upon questions which he knew Mr. Cardwell had studied thoroughly, that without hesitation he accepted his advice, and placed Army Reform high in the political programme of his party.

Except those who worked with and for Mr. Cardwell few know the difficulties he had to overcome when all "society," and almost the whole Army, was against him.

Honest, straightforward, able, clear-sighted and determined, full of amiable qualities, he carried out the herculean task he had resolved to attempt, but the effort killed him. Never was Minister in my time more generally hated by the Army and by almost all its old-fashioned and unthinking officers. And yet, looking back now over the quarter of a century we have since lived through, I can think of no one man whose memory and whose great services entitle him to be remembered with such gratitude by all ranks of the Army, by the nation, aye, and by the Empire at large. What misfortune such a War Minister would have recently saved us!

The public are very justly angry that we had not all the stores required for the mobilization of our army when Mr. Kruger declared war. But for the fact that we were able to find the great number of trained men we did, we are certainly indebted to the army system which Mr. Cardwell created in the teeth of the direst and most influential opposition that any great public measure ever encountered in my time.

When will the people realize that they must never hope to have an Army ready for rapid mobilization under our present Army system? We are never allowed to keep in store the war-plant required for that object. After a war, our War Ministers prefer to live for years upon the military stores purchased during its progress. To provide for future contingencies is not a dogma of party Government. The reason is evident.

CHAPTER XLIV

War Service on the Gold Coast, 1873-4

WE had been assured by many who professed to know the West Coast of Africa well, that whilst our Fantee allies were only remarkable for their cowardice, the Ashantees were irresistible demons whom no neighbouring tribes would face. Indeed, if gloomy forebodings could have prevented the expedition I should never have seen Koomassee. The newspapers teemed with letters describing the difficulties to be overcome and the impossibility of any British troops ever reaching that city. That dreadful creature, "One Who Knows," and those twin brothers, "The Man on The Spot" and "The Man who has Been There," all whined in chorus as dogs do at the ringing of a church bell. The croakings of some were even couched in terms that read more like the menace, "undertake it at your peril and if you dare" than friendly advice to their countrymen in a difficult position. The warning, "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin," was not more emphatic than the gloomy prognostics these false prophets shrieked at all who presumed to differ from them. An engineer officer of high position who had served on the Gold Coast, upon being asked by a friend what he had better take with him there in the shape of "kit," replied, "A coffin; it is all you will require." Many had what our American friends

would designate "axes to grind" on their own behalf, and were furious because they were not allowed to start some impossible railroad to the Prah, or other wild plans of their own conception. If we attempted to march poor ignorant English soldiers through that dense and deadly bush we should be—it was asserted—lured into traps from which not even one would escape to describe what had befallen the rest.

These prophets of evil assumed the attitude one might expect from Cassandra mourning over the folly of those who refused to listen to her warnings. Such, however, are the vagaries of this class of human beings that each and all of those who denounced our folly and our sin for presuming to undertake what they had pronounced impossible were quite willing to undertake the job if the Government would entrust them with it. That was the weak side of their sermons upon the pestilential climate of Ashantee, and it stamped the preachers, not only as illogical but as tainted with personal interest. When I left England the troops upon the Gold Coast were the 2nd West India Regiment, and very small detachments of the marines, in all thirty officers and 770 rank and file. Of them, one officer and 146 were sick. It was appalling to find that of the 130 Englishmen ashore, only twenty-two were fit for duty. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that Ministers should have long hesitated to embark in a war for which their military advisers required the services of British troops who would most probably suffer in like proportion.

The day before I left London to embark at Liverpool, there had been read to me an extract from a letter written by Mr. Cardwell to a high official, in which he said of me: "It only remains now to hope that he will have the moral

courage, if there be impossibilities in his way, to look them fairly in the face, to report them accurately, and leave us "—meaning the Cabinet—" to take upon ourselves the responsibility of dealing with them. Bad as such a conclusion would be, yet if it be based upon truth it must be accepted." I was assured at the time of the confidence Mr. Cardwell and the Cabinet generally reposed in me, which was very gratifying.

I was allowed to select whatever officers I required for the native regiments it was my intention to raise locally, and also those whom I wanted for staff duties. It was evident that the most serious enemy to be encountered was the climate, usually considered the worst in all our foreign possessions. The majority of those I selected for these duties were Staff College officers which in itself was a new departure in such matters. I do not believe that any general ever left England with an abler or more daring body of assistants than I did upon that occasion.

The steamship *Ambriz*, in which my party of thirty-five carefully selected officers embarked at Liverpool on September 12, 1873, was the most abominable and unhealthy craft I ever made a voyage in. The smell of bilge water and of bad new paint with which she reeked poisoned several of us, and the inmates of any workhouse would have complained of the food. But these, as I have said, were small matters to men full, as we all were, of hope, ambition and energy. Many whom we left behind regarded us as foolhardy idiots who having rashly volunteered for a hopeless venture they never expected to see again. But these sadly coloured pictures of what was in store for us had no effect upon the spirits of my tireless companions, men for whom danger seemed to have a strong attraction.

All were young—I, their leader, one of the oldest of the group, was only forty, and all laughed at danger and made light of trials. Though fully conscious of the difficulties to be met and overcome, no party on pleasure bent was ever gayer or apparently more light-hearted. What is it you cannot accomplish with men well chosen from our Army!

The general longing of my party to face the horrors they were told of, and to meet an enemy thus described, made all feel like comrades who had volunteered for some forlorn hope. Any contemplation of impending trials served only to whet our zest for the enterprise in which all had so gladly embarked. Gloomy thoughts were stifled in the daily discussions of plans for overcoming the difficulties we expected to encounter, and this community of aims and ambitions made us firm comrades, a true "band of brothers," full of joy and hope at the prospect before us. A longing for distinction, to do something that those at home would think well of, filled our cup of pleasure to the brim. All other considerations were thrown overboard; they were at least ignored if not forgotten. If care weighed upon any heart it was well hidden away, and there seemed to burn in every one that determination which mocks at all danger that has to be encountered. Life on board ship is usually spent in silly games, idleness and sleep, but no body of adventurers was ever more, if as, studious as we were during the voyage. When it ended all could, I think, have passed with credit an examination in the geography of the country we expected to campaign in. Piles of Blue Books containing years of correspondence between Downing Street and our governors in Western Africa, were closely examined for information as to recent

events, and all works upon its early history were eagerly devoured.

To while away the monotony of reading Blue Books, I asked Captains Brackenbury and Huyishe to give lectures upon our relations with the protected tribes and Ashantees, the circumstances which led to the war, and the topography of the country which was to be our theatre of war. Both lectures were very instructive and focussed in a small compass all that was known upon those subjects.

Twenty-nine eventful years have come and gone since then, and as I look over the list of able and gallant men who were my companions, my helpmates in the "adventure," what memories their names bring before me! Some were killed in action, others, full of youth and hope, fell stricken by the deadly pestilence which rages by day and by night in the dense and deadly forests between the sea and Koomassee. But I am proud to say a large proportion of the survivors have since then written their names clearly upon the pages of our national history.

I felt that ordinary men could not be good enough for the work I had undertaken. I was fully aware of its many peculiar difficulties, and had taken care to surround myself with those whom I could trust, and whom I felt had a similar confidence in me. Several of them had accompanied me three years before in my expedition from Lake Superior to the Red River settlement. Those were men whose nerve I had seen proved in the midst of physical dangers which silence the man of ordinary manufacture, and blanch many a cheek. I knew I could rely upon them in the "tightest" of places, and that no risk of any sort would appal them. Captain, now General, Sir Redvers Buller, of the Royal Rifles, was first and foremost amongst them

as one whose stern determination of character nothing could ruffle, whose resource in difficulty was not surpassed by any one I ever knew. Endowed with a mind fruitful in expedients, cool and calm in the face of every danger, he inspired general confidence, and thoroughly deserved it. Had a thunderbolt burst at his feet he would have merely brushed from his rifle jacket the earth it had thrown upon him without any break in the sentence he happened to be uttering at the moment. He was a thorough soldier, a practised woodman, a skilful boatman in the most terrifying of rapids, and a man of great physical strength and endurance.

My chief of the staff was Lieut.-Col. John McNeill, who had also shared in the hard work of the Red River expedition. Daring, determined, self-confident and indefatigable, he was not a man I should have liked to meet as my enemy in action. He was a first-rate man to organize success under difficult conditions. He was never cast down by bad luck, and always cheery no matter how discouraging might be the immediate or apparent prospect of the position. He was badly hit in our first affair of any marked importance. I was standing beside a gun, then in action, when he came out of the bush near it, supporting one horribly wounded arm with the other, and exclaimed in angry and indignant tones, as if someone had deeply insulted him, "An infernal scoundrel out there has shot me through the arm." All the muscles, tendons and sinews of his wrist had been cut through by a bullet fired close to him, and stood out like strands of an unravelled rope's end, causing me to think in my surgical ignorance that a man so wounded must die of lockjaw: this is an old Army superstition regarding wounds of that nature.

All thought of the pain, which must have been great, was swallowed up in his sheer anger at being thus knocked over in our first affair, and thus cut off from all chance of seeing the war through. This bespoke his character thoroughly, and I mention it because it was this feeling which, animating the officers who took part in the campaign, enabled me to finish it so quickly and satisfactorily.

My medical adviser having told me not to reckon upon McNeill for the coming campaign, I at once sent home for Colonel Greaves to succeed him as chief of the staff, with the duties of which position he was thoroughly well acquainted. Indeed, he knew our Army, its regulations, and customs better than any one I ever served with. A clever and determined man, of iron will and tireless energy, he was daring to a fault, with strong opinions—I might even add prejudices—he understood both the science and the art of his profession. A good sportsman, strong and healthy in body and resolute in mind, he was intended to be the right hand to a leader possessing a spirit and aspirations congenial to his own. Indeed no general could have had a better man at his side, and no one was ever better or more ably served than I was by him.

My military secretary was Captain Henry Brackenbury, and my private secretary Lieutenant Frederick Maurice. Both were artillerymen and strangers to me at the time, but I chose them as men remarkable for their ability, and because both were thoroughly well versed in the science of their profession. The former is not only a profound reasoner with a strong will and a logical mind, but—that rare man to find in our Army—a first-rate man of business and an indefatigable worker also. Whatever he undertakes he performs admirably and thoroughly. Had he

adopted some less noble but more paying occupation in life than the Army he would have made a fortune. He spoke remarkably well, and had he made politics his career, I have no doubt he would have risen to a very high position in that questionable trade. Had he never accomplished anything else for the State than the great services he rendered England throughout our recent and curiously prolonged war in South Africa, he might indeed be well satisfied with what he had done for his country. I do not know an officer who could have performed equally well the heavy and responsible duties which fell to his lot at the War Office during the last three years. England was indeed fortunate to possess so able and untiring a soldier-administrator when Messrs. Kruger and Company forced war upon us, for as usual—as has been, and always must be the case under our unbusinesslike War Office system —we were unprepared for war upon any large scale.

It is not so easy to describe my staunch old friend General Sir Frederick Maurice. His fervid imagination and brilliant intellect, helped by a deep study of strategy and an inexhaustible amount of stored-up military information, marks him out as one of our great military thinkers and best writers upon the science and art of war. The son of a man whose brain power and whose manly courage he has inherited, he would have distinguished himself in whatever walk of life he adopted. As a lieutenant in 1872, he was the successful competitor for the Wellington Prize Essay upon War. His essay was far above those of the other competitors, of whom I was one. When I selected him to be one of my officers in the Ashantee War, I only knew him as the man who had so easily beaten me upon that occasion, but I felt that the man who possessed the

thinking and reasoning power which his essay displayed should be given the chance of adding practice to precept. Since then we have been constant companions, both at home and in many campaigns, and I feel it a privilege to count him not only amongst my ablest and bravest comrades, but as one of my best friends.

My commanding Royal Engineer was Captain R. Home, in many ways one of the most remarkable men I have ever known. I had been acquainted with him for several years, and picked him out as being just the man I wanted for that position in the trying and difficult work before us. I never had cause in any way to regret my selection. This was his first campaign, and no one strove harder to make it a success, though all those around me did as much. An able, daring and imaginative Irishman, he was full of resource. Inclined to be egotistical and somewhat vain of his great talents, he had an ineradicable repugnance to admit he was unable to give detailed answers to all questions, on all subjects, whether great or small, that any one put to him. This failing caused him to be at times a somewhat unsafe guide. But as this peculiarity was well known to his comrades—who sometimes practised amusingly upon it—it did not interfere with his great and undoubted usefulness. It was during this little war that he laid the foundation of the high opinion so generally entertained of him ever after by all those who knew him best. He died five years later, broken down, as I believe, by the strain of a too long continued over-taxing of his great mental and physical powers in the public service. By his death the Queen lost one of her very ablest soldiers. The day his death was announced, a friend found Lord Beaconsfield in tears sitting over his fire. To that friend, who told me the

story, the great Minister said he had just lost, by Colonel Home's death, an officer of whose talents he had so good an opinion that he had long designed him for high and important employment.

Amongst the many keen soldiers around me, none worked more unremittingly, or with a noble daring more wisely governed by thoughtful prudence, than Lord Gifford. Throughout the whole advance beyond the River Prah he had charge of the scouts, with whom he lived and into whom he was almost able to infuse some real pluck. But yet upon occasions all bolted and left him, and how he lived through his many daily dangers and hair-breadth escapes was a wonder to every one. Always well ahead of our advance posts, he had a hard time of it. But continuous danger, bad and scanty food, constant exposure in such a climate, no shelter from rain, and no white man as a companion, these were trials and drawbacks to comfort which had no effect upon him. If ever a man daily and hourly carried his life in his hand, he certainly did so until we reached Koomassee.

From the best fighting materials I could find at hand, I intended to raise two special battalions, one to be under Colonel Evelyn Wood, the other under Colonel Baker Russell. Both were able men, designed by their Maker to be dashing and excellent leaders. There was great rivalry between their respective battalions, and if by chance one came in for more fighting than the other, the less fortunate commander and his officers resented it, not only as a grievance, but as a slight. More than once I had to smooth down the ruffled feathers of each in turn. Their officers were all carefully selected men who I knew could be depended upon implicitly, under all circumstances.

During our preliminary operations, when engaged in driving back the Ashantees into their own territory, the strain upon all my special-service officers was great. They would never confess they were ill until they were nearly dead. I lost many a gallant comrade in consequence. My A.D.C., handsome, gallant young Alfred Charteris, was one of these. The great fatigue he underwent in our first fight was too much for his strength and constitution. He would go out with me that day, and though I tried to dissuade him, when he persisted, I had not the heart to refuse him. The cheeriest of comrades at all times, ever keen to take part in any dangerous duty, I grudged—as well I might—the "monster Death" his prey. But he was doomed, and I lost in him a comrade I had learned to love, and England had to mourn for one of her keenest and most daring soldiers, one of the best and most charming of her sons. Loyal, gallant soul, may we serve together as comrades in that better land where he now "does duty."

I could dilate with equal truth and pleasure upon the splendid characteristics of many others of my companions in this Ashantee War. Without them, or with the very ordinary humdrum men then usually told off for special service from a "Horse-Guards Roster," we could not have achieved what we did with the rapidity and with the clock-work punctuality which characterized all our proceedings. I sincerely trust that in the true interests of the nation, for whose service our Army exists, no out-of-date, clap-trap, or Regulation notions as to the rights and claims of seniors may ever be allowed to interfere with the selection of the best officers in the Army for all the little campaigns we have so often to carry out in horribly unhealthy countries. When special troops have to be raised,

specially selected officers only should be sent with them, and all claims on the ground of seniority must be ruthlessly ignored.

We called at Madeira, at Las Palmas in the Canaries, and at Sierra Leone, the business port of Western Africa. That beautiful spot is surrounded by low green hills which, thick with tropical jungle and abundantly luxurious vegetation, please the eye and make one almost forget that it is well named the "Grave of the Englishman." The bed-rock, wherever exposed, is dark red in colour, and I think the church and a few big houses have been built of it, but if so, in common with all other habitations they have been white-washed over. The turkey buzzard is to be seen here in large numbers sitting upon the church top and other roofs. They are loathsome to look at, but are most useful as scavengers. Horses will not live here nor at Cape Coast Castle, though they do so at Accra. The mountain called Sierra Leone, after which the place is named, is over 2,000 feet high.[1] The news of August 26 from Cape Coast Castle, told us of the enemy's attack upon Dix Cove and that Commodore Commerell had been badly wounded. I felt this much, for I had looked forward with great satisfaction to having so distinguished a sailor as my naval colleague, knowing that he was to be depended on under all circumstances. We all enjoyed our short stay ashore at Sierra Leone.

After an uneventful voyage of three weeks, we anchored off Cape Coast Castle on October 2, and, with all the pomp I could lend the proceedings by a military display, I landed that same evening through the surf, which beats

[1] Milton says in *Paradise Lost*: "Black with thund'rous clouds from Sierra Leone."

ceaselessly upon its sandy shores. I was anxious to impress the inhabitants with the fact that a new species of Governor, a fighting soldier, had arrived to rule them. I was sworn in amidst the firing of salutes, and at once took up my abode in Government House.

It is a good substantial brick building, plastered over and coloured white, as indeed are all the houses in the town. A high flight of masonry steps leads to the first floor, on which are the reception rooms. In front was a small garden, from whose brick-coloured earth sprang extremely brilliant flowers, through which flitted curious lizards emblazoned, as it were, all over in bright heraldic pigments. It was hemmed in unfortunately on all sides by a very insanitary town of blindingly white houses filled almost exclusively with negroes, there being very few half-castes in the place. It was pleasant to see the well-set-up West Indian soldier sauntering about the streets in all the pride of a picturesque uniform, and of that superiority which regimental discipline engenders. But the noise of the negro population, the horrible smells everywhere, rob the evening walk of enjoyment.

I shall never forget the first night I spent at Cape Coast Castle. All through life I have been blessed with the will-power of going to sleep whenever I wished to do so. But upon this occasion I awoke about midnight without any apparent reason. Having listened a few minutes, I became aware of what sounded like the discharge at a considerable distance, and at regular intervals, of some monster piece of heavy ordnance which made the earth shake, as it were, at each succeeding round. I soon realized it was but the ceaseless beating of that calmly but beautiful yet cruel-looking sea as it rolls smoothly and grandly in

from the wide, wide western ocean. Each swelling wave slowly follows its predecessor with apparently all the remorselessness of fate to break at regular intervals upon that ever surf-beaten shore with a noise as loud as the distant fall of a thunderbolt.

When subsequently I grew accustomed to its roar through the live-long night, there was something awe-inspiring yet fascinating in its pulse-like cadence. Those who on that hateful coast have tossed through the long hours of a night made sleepless and horrible by fever, can never forget that sound. It falls on the over-wrought, misery-stricken brain, much as the ticking of Time's pendulum must on the ear of the man condemned to die next morning. But it also reminds you of how often in the fresh, cool air of the rising summer tide at home you have heard the sea break with a soft hissing murmur upon a pebbly shore.

CHAPTER XLV

Cape Coast Castle and its Slave Pens

I FOUND plenty of work awaiting me, and of all the prophylactic physic I have ever taken in a bad climate, hard, constant and imperative duties constitute the best. The morning after my arrival I walked about "my capital," desirous of liking it and its people; but although it has been some centuries in the hands of Europeans I found the town negro an objectionable animal. His vanity, pretensions, his vulgar swagger, made one feel how much more useful he would be if we had never emancipated him. The term "slave" jars upon our ears, and yet the more one sees of the negro at Cape Coast, the more one realizes that he was intended to be the white man's servant. Amongst other places I visited the old castle, built originally by the Portuguese, which still has the armorial bearings of that nation over its gate. There I saw the horrible dens in which the slaves, purchased from the interior, and chiefly from the Ashantees, used formerly to be immured until some slaver arrived to take them to be sold like cattle in the colonies. Those dungeons made me realize with what truth John Wesley had denounced the slave trade as "that execrable sum of all villainies." Let the man who would question that truth visit the old slave pens of Cape Coast Castle.

The Castle presented an extremely busy and picturesque scene. Over-worked Commissariat Officers—perspiring from every pore—were trying to organize crowds of negroes into squads for transport purposes. Each man had fastened round his neck a zinc label on which was stamped the letter of his particular company. It is no easy matter to enforce silence in such an assembly, and yet without it all hope of order is futile. The one prominent man in the crowd was Commissary-General O'Connor. I had selected him for this work because he thoroughly understood the negro character, and had long experience in dealing with black races both in the West Indies and upon this very coast. Thousands of these Cape Coast negroes knew him personally, and all knew him by reputation to be a just man, but one who would not submit to their nonsense: whilst they feared him they were fond of him. He was a man amongst many, and to me he was worth any thousand other men I could have found. He made light of the climate and was an indefatigable worker. A first-rate Commissariat Officer, he could get more out of the negro than any man I ever met: he was indeed a man after my own heart.

I found my Commanding Royal Engineer established in the room where that unfortunate but highly gifted woman, the wife of Governor Maclean, had been found dead with a bottle of prussic acid in her hand thirty-three years before. Outside those quarters, but below them, there is marked upon a stone of the pavement which covers the interior of the castle, the simple letters "L. E. L." No date is given nor any particulars of the lady who lies below it. Her uncongenial and uninteresting husband is also buried there, but not beside her. Many have striven to

lift the veil which shrouds the secret as to how or why she committed suicide, but that she did kill herself is generally recognized as a fact upon the spot. I loved the fertile fancy of her poetry as a boy, and I trust that the spirit of so gifted a woman may rest in peace far away from her commonplace husband. I don't think she ever had a chance in life. How many there are of whom this can be truly said!

Cruelty is ingrained in the African negro's disposition. To see a fellow human being flogged or tortured, or killed in any fashion, is to the black man of the West Coast a positive pleasure. It is to him what a good drama is to the European. Within a week of my landing a negro was hanged for a cruel murder, and the whole black population turned out to see the poor wretch expiate his offence. I was busy writing in my room, when I unexpectedly heard a surging howl of delight from all the neighbouring streets, men, women and children clapping their hands in the excitement of the moment. Not knowing what it meant, I looked out of the window close by where I sat, and from which the lighthouse, near at hand, was the most prominent object. There I saw the still writhing body of this poor criminal as it swayed to and fro from the gallows to the loudly expressed pleasure and amusement of the dense crowds assembled to enjoy so rare a show. I was assured by those who knew the negro best that there was no man in the place who would not attend with great enjoyment to see his own father flogged, so powerful was the attraction that human suffering had for the black man. My dear Abolitionist, do please understand that this horrible depravity is not the result of what was lately known as slavery in America, and before 1833 in our colonies also.

It is as natural to the curly-headed man as the colour of his skin.

At Cape Coast Castle we all attended divine service every Sunday.

As well as I can judge of such matters, we have not, as a nation, been very successful in our attempts to convert the West African negro to Christianity as it is preached in the Church of England. The duties of our Colonial Chaplain upon the Gold Coast were not onerous, and his congregation must always have been small.

In all the wild countries where I have served I have usually found the Wesleyan clergyman more successful in his preaching of the Gospel than the members of other Churches. It was a pleasure to visit the Wesleyan Schools on the Gold Coast, which were well kept and admirably looked after.

The headquarters of the Wesleyan missions on the coast is there, and one cannot praise the zeal and courage of their ministers too much.

There were several substantially built houses in the town, many of them over a century old. From the shore the sea looks generally smooth and seems to reflect the yellow tints of the sun on its ever undulating but generally unbroken surface. Along the line of yellow sand that marks its shore, the surf beats ceaselessly and monotonously. As you looked seawards, every ship rolled horribly with the regularity of a huge pendulum, and without cessation.

Throughout this short but very busy little campaign a great deal was compressed, and had to be almost unduly compressed, into a few months from start to finish. This

was necessary because of the uncertainty of life even among the strongest and healthiest Europeans in such a deadly climate.

I never thought the war could be effectually finished without British troops, and I believed throughout that they could be employed for a dash upon Koomassee without inordinate risk. I was consequently anxious, as soon as possible, to try the experiment of a small fight with the Ashantees, in which native levies, helped by the few battalions I was raising locally from the tribes of the best fighting reputation, should be alone employed. The sooner I could make this trial the better, for if it satisfied me that British troops would certainly be required the sooner I demanded them from home the sooner I should be able to finish the business.

I enlisted two classes of men, those who belonged to warlike tribes who would fight, and those who could only be depended upon as carriers. Amongst the latter were the Croomen, who are admirable boatmen, and some of whom are usually to be found on board all our vessels of war on that station. But though brave as boatmen they tell you plainly they will not fight. Their God is known by the name of "Duppy," and if a Crooman imagines he has seen that deity he lies down to die, and dies very shortly. I have been told this by several who knew the Croomen well and liked them, and I saw an instance of it up the Nile in 1885, where I employed many of them as boatmen. They are a cheery lot and real Neptunes in the water. Although they won't fight, and fear Duppy, they have apparently no fear of death or danger. But I must not pause to tell of the various races I enlisted, for they were many and nearly all of them cowards of a

pronounced type who dreaded the Ashantees. That was unfortunate for me, for the Ashantees were the enemy I wanted them to meet.

By far the best fighting men to be had were the Houssas, a fine Mohammedan people from far inland, near Lake Chad. I have always attributed much, if not all, their superiority as soldiers to the fact that their worship of one God alone, the Creator of all things, elevates their minds above the machinations and superstitions of idolatry, and raises them accordingly in spirit and in courage above the fetish-worshipping tribes around them. The followers of the Prophet in all epochs and in all countries have proved themselves to be daring and obedient soldiers, and these Houssas are no exception to that rule.

The Houssas were often wild in action from lack of discipline, but they were real fighting men, who always meant business, and would follow their white officers. They were the only trustworthy soldiers at hand for the protection of Cape Coast Castle with its Government establishments and prosperous town.

I allowed Captain Arthur Rait, of the Horse Artillery, to man his guns exclusively with Houssas. No men could behave better than they did throughout the campaign under that gallant soul, now in Heaven, but who whilst on earth was the bravest of cheery, determined, able and loyal comrades. A man of cool courage whom no dangers could daunt, of great physical endurance, who never spared himself and who even made light of the fevers which at times held him in their grip. How can England adequately repay the services of such a son? How can her Sovereign thank him sufficiently?

No one could admire the courage, determination and

zeal of Captain Glover more than I did, but looking back now at the events of this campaign, and at the many serious elements of failure it embraced, I feel, that had the interests of the State been alone considered it would have been wiser to have withdrawn Captain Glover altogether from the coast when I reached it.

He was a very remarkable man. I never saw a face on which pluck and firm resolve were more legibly written; indeed he looked the man who was born to rule an African dominion. Endowed with an iron constitution, considerable ability, and great determination of character, as administrator of the Government at Lagos he had acquired much experience in dealing with West African people of all grades and of all colours. He understood them well, and knew how to rule them, though at times, perhaps, his wise and practical methods were not strictly in accordance with the preaching of Exeter Hall nor with the Queen's Regulations. As a lieutenant, in 1853, he had taken part in the unfortunate expedition under Captain Lock, R.N., from the River Irrewaddy into the Burmese jungles. I have referred to this operation at the beginning of these memoirs.[1]

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, having rightly formed a high opinion of Captain Glover's ability, sent him to the Gold Coast with somewhat vague instructions as to raising a native force in the eastern province of our protectorate. He on his part had given Lord Kimberley a rough outline of his plan for bringing the Ashantee King to reason by operating against Koomassee from the River Volta as a base.

In the instructions he received from the Colonial Office

[1] See p. 42, vol. i.

he was ordered to "subject himself to the general control of the officer administering the Gold Coast." He had selected some excellent officers to accompany him, and I believe, had succeeded in collecting about 1,000 Houssas before I arrived. It was an unwise and expensive arrangement, for had I been given those 1,000 Houssas I should have been able to have done all I wanted with two instead of three British battalions, thereby saving a large outlay and the lives of many British soldiers.

No men could have worked harder than Captain Glover and the excellent officers he had with him, but they contributed little towards the end aimed at. Their employment is a good illustration of how much can be thrown away when the War Office and the Colonial Office each attempts to carry on a campaign at the same time for the attainment of the same object. If as a taxpayer I may venture to express an opinion, I would say that it is at least an unbusinesslike proceeding. The War Office and the Admiralty are respectively charged by the nation with the conduct of war, one upon land the other upon sea. I cannot too strongly deprecate the egregious folly of placing the command of a fleet in the hands of a soldier, or of an army in the hands of a sailor: one is as ridiculous a proceeding as the other, and the whole teaching of history warns us against any such stupid folly.

Early in December, 1873, Captain Glover had collected at Blappah, on the lower Volta, a native army that was said to be 18,000 strong. To be of any important use it was essential he should cross the Prah at the point he had selected on or about January 15, 1874, the date I named for him to do so, and when I also meant to cross at Prahsu. He did cross then, but with only some 800 Houssas, and

although he was never seriously engaged I have no doubt that his advance from a different direction did affect King Koffee's nerves. It did not, however, prevent us from having to fight our way through the Ashantee army into Koomassee, and looking back at Captain Glover's costly expedition, I should say that it was embarked upon by Lord Kimberley with too little consideration, and that practically it had not any commensurate effect upon the result of the war. It did, however, deprive me of the services of the 1,000 Houssas Captain Glover was able to collect from Cape Coast Castle, from Lagos and from our other coast stations, upon whom I had counted much before leaving England.

The general plan of campaign I had determined upon before reaching my destination divided itself naturally into two phases: (1) what I could effect before the white troops arrived; (2) what I should do with my little army of British soldiers and natives when I had succeeded in concentrating it at Prahsu. Number one divided itself into two objectives which must be accomplished before number two could be begun; they were as follows:—

(*a*) To clear out the Ashantees from the protectorate with whatever native troops I could raise;

(*b*) The construction of a road from Cape Coast to Prahsu—a distance said to be about seventy-five miles—and the preparation of good shelter for the white troops at the selected halting-places.

I began on number one immediately upon landing.

I quickly realized from what I had seen and learnt of the country between the coast and Prahsu that in the short time at my disposal for operations in the interior the construction of a railway between those two points

was out of the question. The gradients on the roads were too steep for any general use of even traction engines, and the frail bridges were too light to bear them. "Both the railroad and the traction engines were pressed upon me in England and I asked for them, against my better judgment, after my original requisition for stores had been submitted." [1]

By October 8 I had resolved upon having a brush with the enemy as soon as I could complete the necessary arrangements. I find the following entry in my diary of that date: "I require a success to reinspire confidence, which I find has fallen here to the lowest ebb." I had already made many of the arrangements which were necessary for an expedition into the bush, but kept my plans secret to the last moment.

For several weeks past some villages in the Elmina district had been giving trouble. They had sided with the invaders and had supplied their army with provisions. Detachments of the enemy's soldiers were quartered in each village, so that our officers found it dangerous to approach them. I selected them for attack chiefly because they were so near at hand that I could easily make such an example of them as would cause the Ashantees generally to feel that a new state of things had arisen. I had spread false news and had put them off their guard, so that no assistance from Mampon could arrive before I had done with them.

The entry in my diary of October 11 is: "Have made all arrangements for my first fight to come off at daybreak, Tuesday next, the 14th instant. I keep the thing here a profound secret and shall begin to spread false news on

[1] My diary of Oct. 10, 1873.

Monday by announcing that I have received a despatch from Captain Glover saying he is hard pressed at Addah by hostile tribes from the right bank of the river Volta." Then follows a somewhat detailed plan of the intended operation. It winds up thus: "I anticipate, with God's assistance, a complete success, and if so it will do much to re-kindle enthusiasm and pluck amongst these wretched Fantees."

Next morning, October 12, I announced at breakfast to all my party that I had had bad news from Glover; that he was hemmed in at Addah, etc., etc., and that it was possible I should run down the following day in a man-of-war to help him; that I expected another letter from him early the following day which would enable me to settle my plans. I made no secret of this pretended news, and the whole town knew it very soon. The only officers in the secret were my chief of the staff and my commissary-general. They were both trustworthy men, and I could not, even if I would, have kept them in ignorance and at the same time have made all the detailed arrangements that were necessary. I dwell upon this little matter as it may be a lesson to others in the use that can be, and should be, made in war of false news judiciously circulated.

I despatched a letter to Colonel E. Wood, commanding at Elmina, and gave him full details of my plans, when I should join him, etc., etc., impressing absolute secrecy upon him. In acknowledging the receipt of the orders I sent him, he said he would not allow any one to sleep in his room lest he should talk about my plans in his sleep!

I attached the utmost importance to keeping secret this intended operation, because I specially wanted it to be a complete success, and the force available was

small. If the Ashantees heard of my intentions they might easily reinforce the villages I meant to take and prevent me from accomplishing much. I was anxious to make the affair an absolute surprise, knowing from experience how demoralizing a surprise is to all troops, especially savages. Hitherto the enemy had been accustomed to obtain full information through spies and their friends amongst our own allies of everything we did or were about to do. At the same time they took care that we should learn very little of their movements or intentions. If, therefore, I could in the first passage of arms with them succeed in surprising them, they would realize that a new phase of operations was in store for them under the new soldier governor.

The following morning, October 13, I openly announced to my staff at breakfast that I had again heard from Captain Glover, who was so hard pressed that I intended going to his assistance. In the evening I put on board a gunboat the ninety bayonets of which the detachment of the 2nd West India Regiment consisted, telling all ranks they were bound for the Volta. I ordered Colonel Wood to lock up for the night all the carriers who reached him that day as usual with stores. He would thus have them ready for use in the bush, the following morning.

At 9 p.m. that same evening I embarked with my staff on board Captain Freemantle's ship, having put a detachment of bluejackets into Cape Coast Castle as a garrison to remain there during my absence. We anchored off Elmina, and the disembarkation began at 3 a.m. the following morning. There was some little moonlight to help us, but unfortunately the naval people were wrong in their calculation of the tide, which was not full then, as we were

led to expect it would be. All the boats carrying the troops consequently grounded on the bar at the mouth of the little river which falls into the sea there. Some were detained upon the bar for over an hour, some were nearly swamped, all were more or less wet, and the ammunition of some had to be changed upon landing. All this provokingly retarded my movements, as I had hoped to have made at least a mile of my intended march before the first streak of daylight at 5 a.m. I gave Colonel E. Wood command of the day's operations, but I took part in them myself in order to show the natives that I was not only a civil governor but also a fighting general.

Essāmān, the first village we attacked, was about five miles north-west from Elmina. The enemy were completely surprised and we destroyed the place. In this affair Colonel McNeill was badly wounded—I have already described how—and had eventually to be sent home. I felt his loss much, for he was a first-rate man of business and a more cheery and untiring comrade I never had. Captain Freemantle, then the senior naval officer on the coast, was also hit, but not seriously.

After an hour's halt in the neighbourhood of the captured village to enable us to destroy the camps around it, we marched nearly due south to the coast and attacked some other villages, which shared the same fate. In this operation the bluejackets and marines from the fleet co-operated most effectually. By the time the troops engaged had returned to Elmina they had marched about twenty miles. It was a hard day's work in such a climate, but the result was satisfactory. With the exception of poor McNeill, whom I left for the night at Elmina, my staff and I were back in Cape Coast Castle for dinner that same evening.

Our losses had been trifling. Only one man, a Houssa, killed, and three officers and twenty-three rank and file wounded.

Our little fight had a good effect upon what would elsewhere be called "public opinion." The experience gained proved that the Ashantee powder was such poor, weak stuff, that their slugs did little harm beyond a distance of forty or fifty yards. This was good news for all ranks. Throughout the campaign a large proportion of us were hit by these slugs, but in most cases they merely gave a severely stinging and painful blow without entering the flesh. A bad headache or stomachache for some hours was often the only inconvenience they occasioned.

I had thus taught the Ashantees that even in the bush they were not secure from our attack, and had given the weak-hearted Fantees new life by showing them that the English were not afraid to tackle the Ashantees in the bush, and that even there we were the better men. But no less important was the warning I received from this affair. I was shown how little reliance could be placed on even the best native troops when in the bush, owing to the impossibility of keeping them under the immediate control of European officers. I learnt also that in such thick bush we required a very large proportion of officers as the space over which one officer can exercise any useful influence there is very small. Without plenty of officers, the men, both British and native, soon get out of hand. I found that undisciplined native troops were a positive source of danger in the bush, from the reckless manner in which they fired in all directions. The great noise natives make in action, and the smoke which hangs long in such forests, render it difficult to form any good opinion of the

enemy's strength. I wound up my dispatch describing the day's proceedings by urging in the very strongest terms "that the best officers and the most highly disciplined troops are alone capable of bringing this war to a speedy and successful issue."

The experience I gained in the general conduct of military operations in the bush from this little affair was most useful. It enabled me to advise the home Government upon important points regarding the equipment of the three battalions I should probably require from home.

By the end of October I had realized the absolute futility of placing any reliance upon the promises made to me of native levies. I had hoped to have raised a large fighting force from the coast tribes, but a few hundreds only could be obtained. On the other hand, however, I had satisfied myself that with the precautions I had in view I could safely employ British troops for a rapid advance upon Koomassee and the shortest possible stay there would enable me to destroy it.

All through the month of October every exertion was made to construct a good road to Mansue, which is about half-way between the sea and Prahsu, and in which I had placed a garrison. My occupation of that place and the success of the little affair at Essāmān on the 14th of that month had caused the enemy to break up their camp at Mampon and retire nearer their frontier. I endeavoured to follow them up with native levies, but none had courage to tackle the Ashantee troops, even when retreating.

CHAPTER XLVI

Ashantee Attack upon Abrakrampa

LATE in October native rumour said that Amanquatia, the Ashantee Commander-in-Chief, intended to attack Abrakrampa—a village of some importance about eleven miles from the coast. Having paid a visit to the place, I found it was well built and possessed the good brick schoolhouse of a Wesleyan mission that had flourished there before the Ashantee invasion. Colonel Festing, the commandant at Dunquah, had been ordered to move out the same morning for the purpose of giving the retreating enemy's rearguard "a good kick" if he could come up with it. He had only marched a few miles along the "haunted road" when he came upon an Ashantee camp which he surprised and destroyed. He was in action with the rest of their force for several hours, plying them with shot, shell and rockets and with volleys from his Snider rifles. Five officers were wounded, one of whom, Captain Godwin, of the Royal Dublins, was hit badly in the groin. A very good officer, always well to the fore, he was a severe loss at the moment. I saw him the next day, when he declared that his wound was nothing, and that he was certain to be well in a few days. He would walk about to make others believe he was all right. Yet my doctor

told me I need not count upon his assistance again in the campaign. "It is of such stuff that heroes are made."[1]

From the beginning of November Colonel Festing had many skirmishes with the enemy, but he and the young officers with him found it no easy work to hold our forward positions with such cowardly followers as the Fantees. In one of his many skirmishes, which lasted several hours, his native allies ran away. Nearly all the British officers engaged were wounded when trying to lead those cowardly wretches forward. Lieutenant Wilmot, of the Royal Artillery, was shot through the heart, and Colonel Festing when trying to carry him out of fire was wounded in the hip. Wilmot had been wounded early in the day, but like the daring fellow he was would not hear of leaving the front. What gallant soldiers die for England almost daily somewhere or other along her wide extending frontiers!

At poor Wilmot's funeral I overheard one of my young officers say to another, "There goes the first of us."

In the early watches of November 6, I was roused by the arrival of a messenger from Colonel Baker Russell, then commanding at Abrakrampa. He reported being heavily attacked by some thousands of the enemy, and wrote in the middle of the engagement. A letter was at once sent off to the senior naval officer asking him to lend every available fighting man he could. The result was that at about 7 a.m. 300 sailors and marines were on the road for that village. The heat was so great that one-third of the party

[1] In my diary of October 31, 1873, I wrote: "All these officers I have with me, being selected men, seem to think it necessary never to give in. There is a medium in all things, and obstinacy in not confessing to be ill in such a climate may lead to serious consequences."

fell out during the first ten miles. Whilst on the march I had a modest report from Russell telling how successfully he had beaten back the enemy the day before. A little later, however, I received another, saying that the enemy having renewed the attack and nearly surrounded him, he needed help. My men by this time were more or less "done" by their hot march, but as Russell seemed to be hard pressed it was impossible to sit still whilst my trusted and best of comrades needed assistance. We therefore started again at 4 p.m. with the least done-up half of the 300 men I had brought with me, and with the fifty marines who constituted the garrison of Assayboo where we then were. I took with us an ample supply of rockets, ammunition and food. Before leaving Cape Coast, I had ordered the movement of some small neighbouring detachments towards the Abrakrampa road, which were of great use.

We did not march by the direct route to the besieged place as it was desirable, if possible, to avoid having to fight our way into the place with all the stores I had with me. Everything turned out as I had hoped, and we reached the besieged garrison before sunset. All ranks had been cheered on to vigorous exertions during the evening march by the sound of heavy firing in the Abrakrampa direction.

Colonel Baker Russell met me just outside the village. He was as jolly and as happy as usual, but done up somewhat from want of sleep. He had been fighting almost without intermission for thirty-six hours. I don't know which was harder, his constitution or his splendid "never-say-die" determination. My staff took over all the guards and outposts that night, whilst the old garrison had a good night's rest, which they wanted badly. The enemy,

who had scarcely opposed our approach to the place, ceased firing about sundown. Colonel Wood had been ordered to make a reconnaissance in force upon the enemy's rear during my march, but his cowardly Cape Coast people could not be induced to do so, and his guides purposely led him astray.

At daybreak next morning, November 7, the enemy opened a mere dropping fire upon our outposts, and it soon became evident they were already in full retreat. They had lost heavily and expended a vast amount of ammunition without doing us much damage. Several officers had been hard hit, but the slugs had not done much harm, and the lost in killed and wounded amongst our native levies had been small. The Cape Coast chiefs with a rabble following arrived early that day, and I told them they must that afternoon attack the retreating enemy. They said they would do so, but I had no confidence in their assurance, as I knew them to be a cowardly lot.

They paraded at 2 p.m., and were with difficulty formed into a rough line in front of the position held by the Ashantees the evening before. My officers belaboured them with sticks and umbrellas, and Russell's fierce Kossoos drove them on with their cutlasses from behind. Had I not witnessed this scene I could not have believed that the world contained such cowards. The chiefs, if anything, were worse than their followers. But the bush in their front proved to be unoccupied, for the Ashantee army had already fallen back.

I at once sent forward all the King of Abrah's men and our own Houssas to where the main body of the enemy were encamped. They surprised the rear guard, and nearly captured Amanquatia, the Ashantee commander-

in-chief, who was said to have remained behind to have a good drink before he retreated. His camp equipment was taken, including his bed, sedan chair, drums, sacred cock and other fetish appliances. A pursuit was attempted, but in vain ; my native forces of all sorts would do nothing but plunder the quantities of loot left in the enemy's camp and abandoned along the road they were retreating by. A considerable number of slaves were taken, who were mostly fastened by the wrists with iron staples driven into logs of wood. One, a good-looking Fantee woman with a baby, had a miraculous escape. When we attacked the camp her master bolted, ordering her to follow. He thought she did not do so with sufficient alacrity, so proceeded to cut her throat, and whilst so engaged was killed by one of our bullets. A fearful looking and fresh gash in her throat corroborated her story.

I reached Cape Coast that same evening in a high state of fever. I have had hundreds of tussles with that enemy in my career, but I think this was the worst I ever had. Thanks be to God, however, the care and ability of my old brother officer, Surgeon-General Sir A. Home, V.C., and the devoted and careful nursing of lieutenant, now General Sir F. Maurice, pulled me safely through. May my worst enemy never know so bad a time, mentally and bodily, as I had then. For six days there are no entries in my diary. During that well-nigh sleepless period I often felt as if I must go mad, for my thoughts apparently flew with electric rapidity and without reason from one subject to millions of others. I dictated to myself over and over again a letter to Mr. Cardwell in which I resigned my appointment, and expressed my deep sorrow at being obliged to do so. In the worst night of my waking fever,

I remember well how my puzzled brain tried repeatedly to work out a quadratic equation which no amount of transposition would enable me to solve. Existence in the narrow borderland which intervenes between sanity and insanity in such cases is always a fearful experience. I ought to know every natural feature in that parched and waterless region, so often in life has my fever-stricken and waking mind wandered over it, and so often have I seen other men fall struggling upon its hot burning sands never to rise again. But there is nothing loathsome or disgusting in the horrors which overtake the merely fever-worried brain. You may in excited moments suspect those about you of trying to kill you, of some great conspiracy against your body, but the snakes and horrors which haunt the poor, abject creature in delirium tremens, and whose loathsome appearance terrifies him, do not vex the merely fever-racked man. The former is for the time an abject coward, ashamed of himself and almost paralyzed by the visions which scare him. But no terror, no shrinking horror enters into the miseries suffered in malarial fever. The worst moments come from a feeling of inability and want of strength, both mental and physical, to accomplish some quaint objective that for the moment fills the overwrought brain.

The noise of the surf as it beats at night upon the shore, conveys to the keenly sensitive ears of the fever-stricken an idea of fresh coolness, until its monotony becomes wearisome and then actually terrifying. It tells you of that solemn and mysterious ocean that surges upon the coast in often the calmest weather. You fancy you can hear that curious hissing noise each wave makes as it spends its force higher and further up that hard shore of sand. My

fevered, wandering mind often strayed away into a sort of mad practicality, as I puzzled over the millions of tons of energy thus uselessly expended every day and night. Why was not this great force turned to some useful purpose in the economy of the world? Then off darted my illogical mental bewilderment into insoluble speculations as to the fortunes that might be made by any one who had the sense to turn this power to some mercantile purpose. Why, all the spinning jenneys of Lancashire might be kept at work by the unused force of the sea upon the Gold Coast alone!

To the man stricken with delirious fever and thereby distressed through fancied thoughts of duties neglected and of work he ought to, but cannot, undertake, the disturbed sleep snatched at moments brings little rest—no satisfaction. No refreshing comfort comes there with sleep as it does in other countries. Too often it leaves you as it found you, tossing from side to side on your hated bed, restless in mind and body, and with a skin so dry, so hot, that it feels like scorched parchment. Your mind is torn with cares that madden it, and your very muscles lose their power from the fever that rages within you. Will the night never end? What o'clock is it? When will that sun, hated at midday, rise to tell you that the night is over, and another dull day of abject misery is before you? You will be at least so many hours nearer the crisis when some unknown power and authority will decide your fate, coldly regardless of your wishes or your feelings. What will the decision be? Must you go home and so bid good-bye to the immediate ambitions that filled your mind when it was strong and healthy three days ago? Are you to linger on there far from all you love and tortured by your inability to share with comrades the work you had left England to carry out, until grim death

relieves you from all care, all sorrow and anxiety? How the tortured mind strives to answer these self-given questions until feverish imagination, quickened by reviving hope, limns out fanciful pictures of returning health, of partially restored strength. But so weak are you that the very exertion of thinking, and the mechanical fatigue it entails, robs you so of mental power that your wearied head drops upon the pillow, and sleep—soft, silent, gentle sleep, comes mercifully to your rescue.

But what pen could describe the working of a man's brain when it is on fire with a Gold Coast fever? Perhaps Edgar Poe might, but no one else of whom I have ever heard could do so effectively. Knowing what those tortures are from horrible experience I could not have it on my conscience to inflict them upon my worst enemy had I the dire power of doing so. However, on November 20, I was again well and hearty, and fully able to work once more.

After the Ashantee army's severe repulse at Abrakrampa I was busy throughout the month of November in slowly pushing it back beyond the River Prah. At first I was much tempted to collect all the white soldiers and sailors and all my available Houssas in order to make a dash upon the rear of the retreating enemy. With them I felt I might inflict a severe blow, but would that result be worth the cost? The sun and fever would for certain largely reduce the number of fighting white men upon whom I should have to depend chiefly for success in my eventual advance upon Koomassee. It would also seriously retard the construction of our Prahsu road and the erection of shelters at the halting-places along it. Worst of all, any such operation would necessarily eat largely into the magazines of food I had established, and without which I

could not hope to move beyond the Prah. Having deliberately weighed the matter in my mind, I resolved to adhere to my original plan of operations.

All through the months of November and December work upon the Koomassee road was pushed forward unceasingly, stations being established and preparations made for housing the troops during their advance along it. At each station where I intended the white regiments to halt upon their march to the Prah good huts were erected, fitted with bamboo bedsteads to keep the men off the ground at night. The water supply, our most important point, was well attended to. Large filters were provided, and every arrangement that the scientific knowledge of our invaluable principal medical officer, Dr. Home, suggested, was attended to as far as the means at our disposal would admit.

I made frequent excursions to inspect the work and keep all ranks up to the mark. But the heart of every man was in what he had to do, and every private of the Royal Engineers seemed as earnest and as anxious to do all in his power to make the expedition a complete success as the very best of our officers. We have every reason as a nation to be proud of the corps of Royal Engineers. Having served as one of them throughout the most trying period of our great siege in the Crimea, and having watched their work in many campaigns, I know the sapper well. His regimental spirit, devotion to duty, capability and capacity for work, stamp him as the "handy man" of our Army. I only wish we had far more of them, and that several officers in every regiment of cavalry and battalion of foot, and at least a few men of every company and of every squadron in all our regiments of Regulars,

Militia, Yeomanry and Volunteers should go through a course of the field training taught the engineers at Chatham. It is merely a question of money; but during peace the Army is always scamped in means through the military ignorance of our political rulers. And yet, when any fault is found with our officers for not knowing what they could learn, and are anxious to learn, at these special schools, these very politicians are the first to throw up their eyes in feigned pity and sorrow when asked, "Why are not our officers better taught?"

In no campaign where I have served was it so difficult to obtain trustworthy information of the enemy's whereabouts, doings and intentions as it was upon the Gold Coast. "No offers, either of gold to the poor, place to the ambitious, or freedom to the prisoners, can induce any one to approach the Ashantee camp, such a step being regarded as certain death."[1]

The Fantees were such abominable liars and such lazy cowards—qualities commonly allied—that when employed as spies they could not be depended on. Money will usually open most doors and obtain the fullest information for a commander in the field, but although I was prepared to pay anything for Koomassee news I never obtained much that was of any great use to us. My spies were supposed to be in all directions, but I never could be certain that any of them ever went a mile beyond our outposts. It was only by comparing the news daily received from all sources that it was possible to arrive at any useful conclusion. Occasionally a Fantee spy would bring in an Ashantee prisoner, whose information was often useful. But as a rule his captor preferred to kill him in order

[1] My diary.

to hand down his preserved head as an heirloom for future generations of the captor's family as a ghastly evidence of their ancestor's individual prowess. Such a family possession is more highly prized even than refined gold amongst the cowardly coast tribes.

The amount of our information regarding the Ashantee army, or upon the topography and climate of the country lying between the River Prah and Koomassee, was provokingly meagre. Indeed, it was no easy matter to collect useful data regarding even the tribes near our own borders.

I learnt, however, that the period was very short during which British troops could operate inland without exposing them ruthlessly to very heavy losses from fever. If I could not finish the war before March 1, I determined to embark, upon that date at latest, all the British soldiers ashore, even though I had failed to accomplish the object for which I had landed there.

We had already gained some useful experience as to the effect of this terrible climate upon the health of British troops from the small party of Royal Marines, all full grown and seasoned soldiers, who had been ashore with Colonel Festing before my arrival. It was not reassuring.

By the middle of December, 1873, all the three British battalions had reached the Gold Coast. All were historic corps of great reputation, but the best of them was the "Black Watch," a fact I attributed to its having by far the best colonel, now General Sir John Macleod, G.C.B. A true soldier, he was a fine type of the old-fashioned regimental commanding officer in whom all ranks had the fullest confidence, and in his case it was thoroughly deserved.

Captain Andy Wauchope, who had been adjutant of that battalion of the Black Watch, was one of my selected "special service" officers. As soon as it landed he insisted upon rejoining, for, as he said to me, he could not allow it to go into action without him. Nature's nobleman in the highest sense of that expression, he was one of the staunchest friends I ever had, one of the keenest soldiers and truest comrades I ever served with. He was a host in himself. A thorough man of business, and far above the petty jealousies and vulgar rivalries of life, he loved his Highlanders and they loved him. When just a quarter of a century later a Boer bullet pierced his gallant heart, Scotland lost one of her most devoted sons, and our Sovereign one of Her best and most modest soldiers.

The preparations along the Prahsu road for feeding and sheltering the strong, and for doctoring the sick and wounded, were now so good that I felt I might, without undue risk, land my three battalions and also the Naval Brigade which the Commodore had promised me. My plan was to concentrate them and all my fighting native forces at Prahsu, and push thence with all possible haste for Koomassee. I hoped to defeat the Ashantee army on the way, and having taken the capital and its far-famed palace, to make peace there. Should the king refuse my terms, I intended to burn both city and palace, and then to get the white troops back on board ship with the least possible delay. The deadliness of the climate forbade me to calculate upon any greater military results. But I felt that having inflicted such a heavy punishment upon King Koffee and shown him, his people, and all neighbouring nations, that no extent of deadly jungle could protect

them from a British army, I should be able to exact the terms I wanted.

I had already reaped such great advantages from having about me none but carefully chosen "special service officers," that when I asked for a third battalion, I urged it should be made up of eight companies, to be selected one from each of eight good battalions. But the military authorities at home would not listen to any such proposal. They did not know enough of war's many sides to understand my difficulties in such a climate, and refused to recognize the difference in fighting value between a battalion so composed and the ordinary battalion that happens to be first on the roster for foreign service. But if what I write is ever read by any general who has to organize a small force for some special service where the number of men that can be fed during its progress is very small, and the climate extremely bad, I entreat him to select his rank and file as I had selected my officers, and as I wanted to select all ranks of this third battalion. Men so selected are to other soldiers what pemmican is as food when compared with baker's bread to the man who has to carry a month's provisions on his back. The officers and privates chosen as I proposed to select them are on their mettle, and make light of wounds and ailments which would send the ordinary roster man into hospital. Far from hurting regimental feeling, my experience teaches me that this plan of taking companies one from each of several battalions serves to intensify it. As each company represents a battalion, the corps sentiment of every company becomes stronger. In fact, there is so keen a rivalry between the companies that their fighting value when united into one battalion is greatly increased.

But this was not to be. Old-fashioned, illogical prejudices won the day, and I had to do my best with the usual and conventionally constituted battalions.

CHAPTER XLVII

Sir George Colley

THE extra third battalion largely aided me in accomplishing the objects I had in view, and enabled me to leave behind, to guard our communications with Prahsu, the 2nd West India Regiment, of whose colonel and officers at that time I had no high opinion. The transport question was my chief difficulty, but since the arrival of Major Colley, to whom I had given over its command and organization, I felt easier on that head. He was—all round—one of the very ablest men I ever knew. Perfect as a man of business, I never served with any one who could so absolutely evolve order from confusion or straighten out the most tangled web of difficulties so effectually as he could. Always cool, even in the greatest danger, nothing could apparently ruffle his calm decision of character. He was a deep, sober and active thinker who calculated out in his logical brain all the chances and possibilities of any undertaking he had conceived himself, or that had been proposed by another, before he adopted it. In the field, as I knew him, he was an extremely clever, hard-working man of great bodily activity, who never spared himself. When this little war came to an end, I should have picked him out as the ablest officer then in our army, and in all respects as the man most fitted to be a general. I have

good reason to believe that all who knew him well, would have done likewise.

How can I best describe him, my trusted friend and comrade? Like the most famous of history-makers, he too shared the common lot of fallibility. The faults of many spring from jealousy, but his had no such vulgar origin; in others they may be traced to lack of reasoning power or of professional knowledge, but he was a deep reasoner, and few knew as much of the science and art of war as he did. The one serious error I ever discovered in him through all our intimate dealings was his tendency to attempt too much with too little. But its origin did him credit, for I am sure it sprang from an over generous belief in those he collected round him. He certainly always treated them as if they were as keen, as brave, as unselfish, as determined and as absolutely patriotic as he was himself. To this generous fault he owed his death. But though luck turned against him and he consequently failed at Majuba, I do not believe our army at this moment possesses an abler soldier than he was.

About the middle of December, Colonel, now General, Sir George Greaves joined as my chief of the staff, for which position his training, varied experience and great knowledge of our Army peculiarly fitted him.

Early in December my reconnoitring parties reported the Ashantee army to have retired into its own country and to have lost many men in crossing the Prah. The stench from their dead at Prahsu and for some miles south of it was very bad when my patrols first reached it.

Everything being now in train for the advance upon Koomassee, I left Cape Coast Castle on December 27, 1873. The Naval Brigade had landed, that same morning, a splendid

body of men, the pick of the fleet, and no fighting man could wish to serve with finer representatives of the British nation.

Sailors are proverbially fond of pets and the Naval Brigade had adopted one, a negro boy, very black and very small. They had dressed him in the full uniform of a bluejacket, which made him very proud of himself and of the wooden sword they had made for him. When you asked him his name, they had taught him to stand up to attention, to salute and to answer quite solemnly, "Mixed Pickles, Esquire, Sir." They took the utmost delight in teaching him English, and the appearance and frolicsome pomposity of this child was a source of perpetual amusement to all ranks.

The distance to Prahsu was covered in eight marches. The road was fairly good on the whole, but to save time in its construction, it had been made to wind about to avoid such obstacles as even the extremely big cotton trees, each of which would have taken some days to dispose of.

Prahsu is a very pretty spot—in England, it would be described as "lovely." The road we had travelled over resembled generally a tunnel cut through a very dense, high, and thickly matted forest where one could seldom see a hundred yards in any direction. It was consequently pleasant and refreshing to find one self at last on the bank of a fine, running river—some seventy yards in width—with a broad clearance on either side made for camping purposes. The southern bank where the main camp was, is about thirty feet above the river level. The engineers had effected wonders. The indefatigable energy of Captain Home had infused itself into all ranks under him, and all worked with a will at high pressure. The construction of a bridge was being pushed forward with all possible speed, as I was anxious to pass my invading army dry-foot over it.

A few hours after my arrival, I heard from our advanced scouts that messengers had just come with a letter from the Ashantee King. They had halted about 1½ miles north of the river to await orders. Brought into our camp they were lodged in a good hut under a guard. The Naval Brigade, hale, hearty and in the best of spirits reached Prahsu the following morning, no man having fallen out since leaving the coast. They were marched past the huts in which the members of the Ashantee Embassy were kept under a guard, and deployed into line in front of it, in the hope that the presence of white troops might impress them.

As my bridge was to be passable on January 5, I resolved to detain these messengers until they could return by it, and sent forward Russell's Regiment to a village some miles distant, through which they would have to pass on their return journey. I hoped the report of these facts might make King Koffee realize that war was intended unless my terms were accepted.

Subsequently, I had them shown the Gatling gun in action. The sharp roar of its fire, the precision of its aim and the way in which its bullets threw up the water all round the target in the river, impressed them; at least I thought so. That same night I was roused by a shot fired close to me. The guard over the "Embassy" were talking loudly, and upon inquiry I learnt that one of the party had shot himself. His brother, who was the chief amongst them, said he had been brooding over his position and believed we meant to kill him. Permission was given his friends to bury him on the north bank of the Prah, in Ashantee territory. I was able to send the funeral over by the bridge which was just made passable. Each of the Ashantees who attended the ceremony threw sand on the body before they covered up the grave.

My answer to King Koffee stated the terms upon which I would make peace. I warned him that I was about to invade his kingdom from four different points: by the Wassah road, from Prahsu, from western and also from eastern Akim to enforce those terms should he refuse to accept them. I impressed upon him that hitherto his soldiers had only fought against black men helped by Englishmen, but that unless he hastened to accept my terms he would have to meet an army of white troops.

Up to the last I honestly did all I thought most likely to secure a good and promising peace without fighting. I felt quite certain of victory, as who would not have done with the men I had about me? I did not mind much how many I might lose in action, for soldiers are made to die there—and oh! how fortunate they are who do so—but I was well aware that every extra day's detention in that deadly climate meant grievous sickness to hundreds, and death to many. This loss of life from disease was the factor in my calculation most difficult to deal with, and always the most horrible to contemplate.

I was agreeably surprised to find the climate of Prahsu so pleasant. We had only had one day's rain since leaving Cape Coast Castle, and as the Harmattan wind had set in, there was so little moisture in the air that the skin soon assumed its normal condition. The days were hot, of course, but the nights were positively cool and conducive to sleep. At night the Great Bear and the Southern Cross both lit up the camp, making the scene even more than usually picturesque. There was nothing wanting to make it quite beautiful but horses, and their absence was felt for many reasons. But no horses would live long there, nor could we have found suitable food for them.

The transport difficulties were now at their height; all the carriers intended for the Welsh Fusiliers had bolted in a body, and every post brought me news of further desertions. In fact, the black men of our protectorate still firmly believed that the Ashantees would "make mince-meat of us." I was for the nonce compelled to stop all further disembarkation of troops, and in order not to interfere with the formation of reserve supplies at Prahsu, I had for the moment to convert the West India soldiers and all of Wood's Regiment into carriers. The load of the carrier in the protectorate was only 50 lbs., so the daily labour imposed was not excessive, and those soldiers whilst so employed received extra pay.

The Commissariat Department had promised I should have ample provisions for the campaign at Prahsu by January 15, the date I had fixed for crossing the Prah River. This failure in our transport arrangements made me all the more anxious to obtain a good peace without fighting, although I was well aware what a grievous disappointment that would be to all the ardent spirits surrounding and helping me.

I felt my position deeply, for it was truly humiliating to be at the mercy of these worthless and contemptible Fantees. However, being of a hopeful temperament and imbued with the firmest trust in God's assistance, I put on a smiling face and met my difficulties with a sort of defiance. In the Red River Expedition I had to bring back my regular troops over a range of mountains before ice should close the lakes and rivers, and here, in equatorial Africa, I was again pressed by Time's inexorable clock, having to accomplish my task before the great rains set in.

Major Colley had already begun to evolve order out of confusion. For a long time he had 10,000 carriers in pay, and

the system he established soon began to work with a mechanical precision. Thanks to him the delay occasioned by the previous want of system was soon rectified.

Throughout these early operations I had the good fortune to have with me Sir Anthony Home, V.C., one of the ablest and most hard-working of military doctors I ever knew; a man who loved his profession and who never spared himself in any way. He had been surgeon to my battalion during the Indian Mutiny, and was as remarkable for his coolness under fire as for his medical skill. He was a serious thinker and a well read companion whom it was always a real pleasure to be with. Inclined, however, by disposition and innate caution to take rather a sad than a bright view of life, when he told any of my special service officers they had fever and must take to their beds they were wont to resent his decision. He was always right, however, though this "never give in" trait in their character was much to their credit, and contributed largely and directly to the success of the war. All were afraid to go near Dr. Home when they felt a little out of sorts lest he should put them on the sick list, and worse still, send them home or even to Madeira for a trip. In many instances I had to order men to go on the sick list who, although in a high fever, had positively refused to admit there was anything wrong with them.

Towards the end of October, a dear friend, a congenial spirit, an old and trusted comrade, Captain, now General Sir William Butler, had joined me at Cape Coast Castle. He had done right good service during our Expedition to the Red River, where I came to know him well, to admire his brilliant ability and to value his friendship highly. Possessing the warmest and most chivalrous of hearts, had he lived in mediaeval times, he would have been the knight errant of

every one in distress. Sympathy for all human, indeed for all animal suffering, was in him an active living force, always striving to help the poor in body, and to comfort the weak-hearted. A loyal subject of the Crown, he yet always entertained a heartfelt sympathy for those whom he believed to be of a down-trodden race, and a lost cause appealed to all his deepest feelings. He was the first to recommend the raising of a regiment of Irish Foot Guards, and he has lived to see carried out what he was scouted at and ridiculed for by some unwise men at the time. Amongst my many comrades he was remarkable for that inestimable gift in a commander, a keenly bright and lively imagination, an essential quality in which it would seem we were somewhat deficient during our recent long war in South Africa.

He was just the soldier I wanted for a mission to the King of Western Akim. He possessed all the qualities required for such an independent undertaking. Of an iron constitution and indomitable energy, he was also an experienced traveller in wild and little known lands. In him the daring of his race was tempered by discretion, whilst a rare originality helped the ambition which burned within him. Above all things, he would be on this mission his own master.

He reached Accra in a gunboat on November 4, and at once started inland to find the miserable creature styled the King of Akim, who had been informed of his mission. His orders were to induce that royal personage to close in upon Amanquatia's army, then trying to re-cross into Ashantee at Prahsu, where the river was wide and at that time unfordable. He soon discovered that the King and all his male relatives were arrant cowards, and that his subjects resembled their sovereign in that respect. In fact, the Akim monarch's army was a sham, and its behaviour reminded one of the

negro burlesques which often afford amusement at country fairs.

Unable to induce the King to fulfil his promise to invade Ashantee, Captain Butler, to show him how sacred was the word of a British officer, crossed the Prah near Berouassee on the day fixed for doing so, having with him only a couple of British officers and a few Fantee policemen! The place of crossing was about thirty miles above Prahsu, and about a like distance below the point where Captain Glover crossed it at the same time. The last-named officer was also unsuccessful in inducing the local "braves" to whom he had been commissioned to cross the Prah, but he took with him into Ashantee 800 well armed and fairly trained Houssas who were reliable as fighting men.

No one ever worked harder or under greater difficulties than Captain Butler in this campaign. Though suffering from fever he would not give in, and in the end, after many heart-breaking delays, he at last succeeded in persuading this chicken-hearted King and his noisy rabble to cross the "Sacred River" also.

On January 27, with about 14,000 of these useless rascals, he reached Akim, not more than twenty miles east of the road by which our army was advancing upon Koomassee. There he found himself near the Ashantee outposts, a fact which so alarmed his wretched following that the King of Akim and his chiefs resolved to retreat. They packed up their small amount of baggage in a hurry and off they went to the rear. No remonstrances had any effect. They were afraid of the Ashantees; that was enough, and so ended Captain Butler's mission to the King of Western Akim.[1]

[1] I do not know a more pitiful story than that told by Sir William Butler in his book, *Akimfoo, the History of a Failure*. He and his

Although neither he nor Captain Glover was able to engage the Ashantee army, I have no doubt the news received at Koomassee of their having crossed the Prah about the same time as the main army, and of their having marched towards that city, each with a considerable following, had an effect upon the nerves of King Koffee and his chiefs.

Captain Glover had as much difficulty with the Akim kings as Captain Butler had encountered, notwithstanding his long previous experience in the ways of the West Coast rulers. He and the other officers with him never spared themselves. They worked hard and bravely under great difficulties and deserved success, but it was not destined to crown their efforts.

Captain Glover was informed by me on December 11, 1873, how affairs stood on the Cape Coast Castle-Koomassee road. He was told I could not have everything ready to cross at Prahsu before January 15, 1874, upon which day I expected him to be also on the Prah. I left him "the fullest latitude in the selection of the points on the Prah where you will cross that river," etc. His answer of December 14 to that letter was, "I shall be established on the banks of the River Prah by January 15, with all the available force that I may be enabled to assemble. Bozoroo, in Eastern Akim, one day's journey in rear of river Prah, will be my principal depôt from which my advance will be on Juabin."

But in this forecast he was doomed to disappointment; and yet there was no man who could influence those cowardly fellows as he could. If his knowledge of the country and its

gallant companions, Captains Brabazon and Paget, though all struck down by the terrible fever which rages in the dark forests of that gold-bearing country, struggled manfully on under every species of heart-breaking disappointment.

people, joined to a tireless energy, indomitable pluck, and great tact in dealing with natives could not secure their obedience, it was of no use for any one else to hope for success.

He wrote to me on December 22 that he saw no possibility of being able to cross the Prah before February 1. As I read that statement I pitied him with all my heart, for I well understood how much that confession of failure must have cost a brave and sanguine man. I knew he cordially wished to co-operate with me and to help in the great object which I had been sent out to achieve, but he had trusted the worthless negro chiefs and they had deceived him. My answer was a positive order that with all the Houssas and disciplined troops at his disposal he was to move without delay by the shortest route to the point on the Prah he had previously selected to cross at. In a private note of the same date I explained my plans and pressed upon him the fact that the first object was to defeat the Ashantee army as soon as possible, and having done this to send home the British troops without delay. "You will, therefore," I said, "make this your one object. If necessary to its attainment, you will break off all operations on the east bank of the Volta, which have no direct bearing upon the main issue." I wound up by saying plainly: "Unless you can accomplish this, no matter what may be your success with the Awoonbas, you must clearly see that, as far as this war between England and Ashantee is concerned, you might just as well be operating on the Zanzibar coast as in the Awoonba district." I added: "From what I know of you, I feel that if what I require of you could be accomplished by any one it will be so by you." It cost me much to write this, for I sincerely felt for all his disappointed hopes, but I was responsible for

the main issue at stake, and that came before all other considerations. He would not have been human had he not felt how much my orders upset—at least for the time—all his own great plans for the future. But like a gentleman, having pointed out to me the dangers he conceived I was deliberately incurring, he obeyed orders, and did all he could—though much was not in his power—to further the object I had in view.

A bridge head was constructed on the north bank of the river at Prahsu, and Russell's Regiment was sent to garrison it. Lord Gifford with his scouts, always about ten miles ahead of the army, was now in daily touch with the enemy.

The Ashantee Embassy started on their return journey on January 6. I hoped their report to the King that when on the march they had passed through a column of white men moving towards Koomassee, might induce him and his Ministers to believe that we had already begun the invasion of his kingdom. As soon as the Embassy with all its belongings was well out of sight, the Naval Brigade were to return to Prahsu.

The envoy looked terrified as he passed through the Naval Brigade, and sent me back a message to beg I would advance no further until I had received his King's answer. It reached me on January 12, and with it came one of the German missionaries who had been a prisoner in Koomassee for nearly four years. What he had to tell, though very interesting, was of little value to me. The refrain of the King's letter was an earnest appeal, that to "prevent further misunderstandings" I should not advance beyond my present camp, "for fear of meeting some of my (his) captains as to cause fighting." He begged to be allowed to keep Mr. Dawson with him as the only person he had who could write

and interpret English letters. What he wanted was, he said, a treaty of peace.

I sent back the messengers next day to the King with my answer, in which I expressed my pleasure at his desire for peace. But I could not, I said, proceed further with negotiations until he had sent me the other prisoners detained at Koomassee. I reminded him that I had already told him the terms upon which I was prepared to make peace, and that until they were complied with I could not "halt any of my four armies" then advancing upon Koomassee. I added, that with a view to the future maintenance of peace it was essential that he and his people should clearly understand that they could no more prevent an English army from marching into his territory, whenever his hostile proceedings might make such a step necessary, than he could stop the sun from rising daily.

This second letter from the King showed how much the passage of his previous messengers through a body of white troops on the march towards Koomassee had seriously affected his nerves.

By January 14, Lord Gifford with his scouts and a company of Russell's Regiment had reached the foot of the Adansee hills, some twenty miles from Prahsu on the Koomassee road. The remainder of Russell's Regiment was close behind. That same day a strong detachment of the 2nd West India Regiment, followed the day after by Rait's Artillery and Wood's Regiment, crossed at Prahsu. This force, which constituted my advanced guard under Colonel McLeod, of the Royal Highlanders, seized the Adansee hills on January 15, the enemy's scouting parties falling back before it.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Ashantee War

MY headquarters crossed the Prah on January 20, that was five days later than my original calculation. But as I met with no resistance at first, I was able to reach the Adansee hills as early as I had originally reckoned upon. I was indeed glad to leave Prahsu behind—pretty as that clearance was with all its busy camp life—to dive into the depths of the dark, mysterious forest which now lay between us and our goal, the Ashantee capital.

The satisfaction of feeling that we had at last begun our invasion of the Ashantee kingdom was, however, sadly marred by the death that day from fever and dysentery of Captain Huyshe, of the Rifle Brigade. He had worked unremittingly towards the accomplishment of that invasion, but Providence decreed he was not to see it. He had been my aide de camp during the Red River Expedition, and up to his falling ill at Prahsu, he had zealously discharged the intelligence and topographical duties with great advantage to the public service. From my personal intercourse with him I had come to know his fine, soldierly qualities. A thorough gentleman and a keen soldier, he lies buried beneath a great cotton tree at Prahsu.

My white soldiers and sailors had no longer the comfortable huts fitted with bedsteads which had been provided for them

at every station south of the Prah. Until they returned to Prahsu they had to sleep on the damp soil, of decaying and decayed vegetable matter. This was injurious to the white man's health, and our soldiers soon began to suffer from fevers in consequence. My sick list grew larger every day, making me more anxious than ever to end the war with all possible haste.

At Accrafoomu, our second stage beyond the Prah, I was joined by Commodore Sir William Hewett, V.C. He commanded the naval squadron on the coast, and was the cheeriest and best of lion-hearted comrades. He had done everything man could do to help us, indeed I never asked him for anything he did not freely give, allowing none of what always appears to soldiers the curious and incomprehensible niceties of naval etiquette to interfere with what he felt to be for the general good of the Queen's Service. He was very highly esteemed by his own men, and he soon became equally so by all ranks of the army. Upon his arrival in camp he was warmly and loudly cheered by all. No one could know him without becoming personally attached to him, and no soldier or sailor could be with him in action without being proud of him as a comrade and as a fellow countryman.

Soon after crossing the Prah, we found a white cord stretched from tree to tree along our road. It was evidently meant as a fetish; a native report said the idea had been taken from our telegraph wire, which the Ashantees believed to be a great English fetish.

The dense forests through which our road now lay are very fine. They may be the breeding ground of deadly diseases, but they are truly beautiful to look upon. They consist of what I may describe as three distinct stories. The ground-floor story is made up of the ordinary close, tropical bush, of

from fifteen to twenty feet in height, through which the true forest trees of equatorial Africa push their thick lofty stems and big branches to form the second story. These are of about the same size as the great forest trees of Western Europe. The third story, towering over and far above the other two, is formed by the straight and smooth-stemmed cotton tree, with its mushroom-shaped roof, many being over one hundred and fifty feet in height. The big parrots of this region when perched upon them look no larger than English robins. This tree has no branches until close to the top of its pillar-like stem, where they shoot out almost horizontally, like the iron stays of a great and shallow umbrella. A large inverted green saucer placed on the nozzle of a tall and massive silver candlestick, would convey a good idea of what the cotton tree looks like. Its polished stem of soft and pearly grey tapers little, and being great in circumference all the way up to where the branches spring from it resembles in shape the "tall bully" that "lifts its head and lies" near London Bridge. The round stand of the candlestick represents the roots. They go little into the ground, but mostly rest upon it as the stand of the candlestick rests upon a table. Rising up from the outer edge of that stand are great projecting buttresses often covering a circle of ground that would measure a couple of hundred feet in circumference. Those ribbed buttresses add much to the stability of the tree and to the magnificence of its imposing appearance. No one of these trees, can, I believe, stand alone if you cut down the two lower stories of forest growth which surround and shelter it from the wind.

But what strikes the stranger most in this weirdly-dark forest scenery, are the thousands of twisted creepers and winders of all shapes and sizes which cross and recross one another, the smaller ones hanging in tangled masses festooned

between the trees, like the tangled locks of some giant Meg Merillies. Many of these creepers are thicker than a man's wrist, and to get through this lower jungle you must cut them, for none will break. Twisted round them again, are usually others of a tougher and more cordlike quality which compress the expansion of those round which they twine, pinching them into the spiral regularity of a corkscrew. These great winders hanging from branch to branch in vast quantities, at every angle and in puzzling irregularity, bar the way to all who would pass in any direction. They are like the stout wire netting with which ships of war protect themselves against torpedoes. Look down any chance opening in the depths of this awe-inspiring forest of green and dripping foliage, and as the gentle wind sways about these ropes and coils of brown creepers, one thinks of the loose shrouds, broken stays and halyards and confused mass of rigging that hang from yard and mast of the old and once beautiful "three deckers" still to be seen as ruins in the neglected backwaters of our naval harbours.

The surface of these forests is strewn with fallen timber of all shapes and sizes, the accumulation of ages, piled there pell mell like so many spilikins and in every gradation of vegetable decay. Through them and around them spring up at places myriads of brightly coloured flowers and huge sombre ferns. Practically, all progress through these forests is impossible for troops, and even for an individual it is slow in the extreme and most fatiguing.

Plants hidden from all sunlight soon lose colour and if the native races who live in or have daily to traverse these dark jungles are constituted as we are, they ought to be a sad non-laughing people. There is something indescribably ghostly in the midday twilight of these forests. It was depressing,

uncanny work to march long distances through them, or to live amidst such a tangled steamy mass of perpetual green, where you can only see a few yards ahead, and where little sunlight ever penetrates to brighten the path or to gladden the wayfarer. I never saw an animal during our march to Koomassee, not even a rat or a snake, though I was told there were many of both. But if animals are rare, columns of ants in myriads cross your path everywhere with all the earnestness of serious occupation for which that industrious race is proverbial.

Headquarters reached Moinsee at the foot of the Adansee hills, January 23, 1874, where I met messengers with a letter from King Koffee and with the remainder of the European prisoners, consisting of the Frenchman, Mr. Bonnat, and of Mr. and Mrs. Ramseyer with two children, one a baby recently born. Having thus obtained their release I felt myself much freer to act. In this letter the king said he would pay the £200,000 I had demanded, but expressed grief at our rapid advance and begged me to stop. My answer was that for the present I would advance but slowly to give him time to comply with the preliminary terms of the treaty, which were: the immediate release of the Fantee prisoners whom he still detained at Koomassee: that pending the conclusion of peace he should send me as hostages his mother and also the brother who was his heir: and the immediate delivery of one half of the gold he had now agreed to pay. That when he had complied with these terms I would halt the army and proceed to Koomassee with a guard of 500 British soldiers to sign the treaty. It was for him to decide whether I went there as a friend or as an enemy.

Two days later Headquarters were moved to the nice clean town of Fomnanah, beyond the Adansee hills, where I halted

four days to form a supply depôt and to close up the troops from the rear. The delay would also show King Koffee that I meant to keep to my promise of advancing slowly in order to give him time to arrange for complying with my demands. Thanks to the untiring energy of Captain Home, the road so far was well cut, every stream being bridged. Entrenchments had been constructed at all the stations beyond the fortified bridgehead at Prahsu, and large storehouses had been erected at each of them. These places were made secure from any attack the enemy knew how to make upon them.

Fommanah possesses a very tidy palace and several good well-kept houses. I was much surprised to find so many signs of civilization in it. The houses have much steeper roofs than are to be seen near the coast; the house I occupied was quite a pleasant residence.

The scenery on and around the Adansee hills was delightful. We seemed to breathe more freely on that elevated ground, where also the forest was much less thick and dreary. The day I reached Moinsee Captain Butler was at Enoonsu, about twenty miles east-north-east of Fommanah, with a small force of Western Akims: Captain Glover with a strong battalion of Houssas at Abogoo, some forty miles north-east of that same place, and Captains Moore and Dalrymple at Kotakee, west of the Prah, about twelve miles south-west of Prahsu and some thirty miles south of Fommanah. The presence of these officers in Ashantee must have told upon King Koffee's nerves, although their columns, being composed exclusively of natives, were not dreaded like the British force then marching straight for the capital and already within thirty miles of it.

Fommanah and all the surrounding villages were deserted.

No inhabitants were to be found anywhere, though we knew we were closely watched by Ashantee scouts in all directions. There, however, rumours reached me through spies, and they were corroborated by the prisoners we captured daily, that the enemy were collecting in great force at Amoaful under Amanquatia. That place was only about thirteen or fourteen miles further on towards Koomassee, and my advanced guard was already at a village about half way between it and Fommanah. I halted four days at Fommanah to collect supplies to enable me to push forward rapidly when the moment came for the capture of Koomassee, and my doing so also fitted in with the general tenour of my communications with the King. If he meant peace, as he said he did, my stay at Fommanah would seem a concession to his earnest request that I should do so.

January 29 I pushed forward my Headquarters about seven or eight miles, and as I was in the act of camping received further letters from the King begging me to halt. Within ten minutes of the messenger's arrival he was on his return journey with my answer. It was to the effect that having thus halted at Fommanah to please him—may God forgive me that fib—and to give him time to carry out the terms of peace he had agreed to, I now found he had used that time in collecting an army to fight. I would therefore halt no more.

Mr. Dawson—the native interpreter I had left with the King for the convenience of correspondence—said in a note: "See 2 Cor. ii. 11." That verse is: "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*" He evidently intended to warn me against treachery, and I gathered from the general tenour of his communication that the King meant to fight. On January 29, the Adansees

were cleared out of the position they had taken up to the westward of the main road. The affair was a complete success, but I had one officer killed, Captain Nichol, the adjutant of the Hants Militia, who was an elderly man. He lost his life through his humane feeling, for had he not restrained our men from firing there would have been no enemy left in the direction from which the bullet came that killed him. The enemy left behind about fifty of their dead, so their total loss in killed and wounded must have been heavy. Several Ashantees were taken, a slave woman amongst them, whose master before he bolted had tried to shoot her. He had fired twice, hitting her both times. She said the King had promised his chiefs he would take the field himself, and she was certain that he meant to come by the main road. Our surgeon extracted all but one of the slugs her brutal master had hit her with, and we gave her clothing to cover her absolute nakedness.

That most zealous of "Intelligence" officers, Captain Redvers Buller, had sent an Ashantee spy into the enemy's camp the evening before, from whom he learnt that the main force of the enemy was on rising ground about one mile short of the village of Amoaful. He described their position well. They intended to follow their usual battle tactics, that of drawing on their enemy in front and when they had succeeded in doing so, to pounce upon his flanks and so cut off his reserves in rear.

It was a great relief to all my comrades to feel that the question of "peace or war"—so often debated amongst them—was solved at last, for it was now evident the King meant to fight. His pretended negotiations were only designed to throw me off my guard in order to give him a better opportunity of destroying us at a disadvantage. He had

utterly failed in this object, and also in his endeavours to induce me to halt.[1] The halts I made were absolutely necessary to enable me to construct the road, to bridge the many streams we had to cross, and to bring up sufficient supplies of food and ammunition for the advance upon Koomassee, and also for the return journey to the coast. I had endeavoured to make King Koffee believe that my halts were made as a concession to his urgent requests on the subject, but had I been absolutely certain from the first that he meant to fight I could not have met him at Amoaful a day earlier. I had offered him fair terms, but neither he nor his chiefs would accept them because they firmly believed they could destroy any army with which we could cross the Prah. And now, when upon the point of attacking him in the position he had selected, I felt my men were fully equal to the task before them. My communications with Prahsu were protected by eight fortified posts, all well manned and provisioned, and quite able to resist any attack an enemy without artillery could make upon them. I was sorry he had not selected a position nearer his capital, for my desire was to deliver my decisive blow sufficiently near it to admit of my pursuing the beaten army into its streets, and to take possession of it as the immediate result of a victory. I was anxious to finish the war with one big fight : but the King's determination to fight at Amoaful made it tolerably certain I should have two battles, which was a disappointment. Throughout this war my one longing was to end it with all possible speed, as every extra day it lasted, meant more deaths from fever. This thought was never absent from my mind.

My little army breakfasted early, and moved off at day-

[1] I afterwards learnt the Ashantees nicknamed me "The man who would not stop."

break on January 31, 1874, all ranks feeling they had a tough job before them that day. I was convinced we should be attacked in flank and rear by the enemy, as their immense superiority in numbers would enable them to carry out to the fullest extent their favourite tactics of surrounding the army opposed to them, and my force was too small to prevent it. I determined therefore to advance in what I may describe as a large open square formation, each side having its own selected commander. The position to be occupied by each battalion was carefully explained to each commanding officer. The front fighting line was to be between six and seven hundred yards in width, its centre being marked by Rait's guns on or near the Koomassee road. The rockets were to be at the front angles of the parallelogram. The troops on the side faces were to cut paths as they pushed forward through the underscrub each at a distance of about three hundred yards from the road. My force was too small to enable me to prevent the enemy from getting all round us, and he had also the great advantage of being able to move easily through the dense forest where we could only pass by cutting paths, a slow, difficult and dangerous operation. It is only very brave and highly disciplined troops having great confidence in one another who could be trusted to fight such an enemy under these conditions. In the semi-darkness of those jungle recesses, the nerves are tried by the feeling that you are more or less cut off from any immediate support, and by hearing the triumphant shouts of a barbarous, inhuman enemy on all sides. But I knew my men: I had tried them and had no hesitation in trusting them.

In early youth I had fought through the beautiful jungles of Burmah, where a luxuriant undergrowth afforded the enemy good cover. I recall their bright cheerfulness with pleasure,

for (when I had enough to eat) I thoroughly enjoyed campaigning in them. There was nothing weird or mysterious in their thickest recesses, and the sun's bright rays pierced through them everywhere. But here, in the gloomy shade of this mighty, solemn Ashantee forest, how different! How sobering to the highest spirits was its dim, shadowless gloom. Rank earth-smelling dampness pervaded it, and soft slimy depressions in the ground, whence oozed black, oily mud, marked the course of what were streams at times. It seemed indeed, that " brooding darkness spread his jealous wings " to protect those " ebon shades " from the invader. If there be gnomes on earth who guard the dark recesses of nature, surely they must haunt these fever-breeding forests of Ashantee.

Two miles along a bad path took me to the few little huts which constituted the village of Quarman. The day's work began about 9 a.m. with some desultory firing in the vicinity of a small village called Eganasee, a couple of miles beyond Quarman. Lord Gifford with his scouts drove the enemy out with little difficulty, but sent back to say the Ashantees were in considerable force beyond the village. In cutting the paths for the side faces of the square poor Captain Buckle of the Royal Engineers was killed early in the day. He was a skilful soldier, a brave, determined and daring gentleman.

As soon as we began to move forward, it became apparent that the enemy meant to make a determined resistance. They evidently trusted in their great numerical superiority which enabled them to surround us, in the strength of their forest position and in their well-known fighting reputation. They all knew that their grandfathers had utterly destroyed Sir Charles MacCarthy's army in British territory, and if they reasoned at all, they must have felt how much easier it

would be to cut to pieces this new army that had dared to cross the sacred Prah, to penetrate into the interior of their country, and even to approach their fetish-guarded capital !

The fight soon raged loudly on all sides. It was curious sensation that of being fired into upon four faces of our big square by a howling mass of many, many thousands of savages, determined to kill us or to die in the attempt, and yet to be unable to see them in the dense bush beneath that awe-inspiring forest. Those who have fought only in the open can barely realize how unpleasant is such a position to the nerves of most men. The roar of musketry on all sides soon became deafening, and the smoke of the bad Ashantee powder hung heavily round us, there being no breath of wind in that thick forest to carry it away. Rait's guns were hard at work, and the loud hissing sound of the rockets as they rushed through the lower bush, striking trees and bursting among the enemy—as we all hoped—added to the interest and excitement of this strange and novel scene.

Reports from all quarters came in rapidly telling the same story : " many wounded," " hard pressed," " would like some support." From the rear came the news that our baggage had been attacked and the carriers had bolted. The Brigadier commanding the front face of the square subsequently described the situation between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. as being " in the midst of a semi-circle of hostile fire, and we hardly ever caught sight of a man. As company after company of the Forty-second descended,with their pipes playing, into the ravine, they were almost immediately lost sight of in the bush ; and their position could only be judged of from the sharp crack of their rifles in contradistinction to the loud, dull roar of the Ashantee musketry." It is not so easy as some may think to smile, look happy and thoroughly satisfied

as you peruse such reports amidst the booming of guns and a roar of small arms. I was in front of the native houses that constituted the village of Quarman, and as I walked up and down smoking cigar after cigar I felt that all neighbouring eyes were upon me. It was a curious sensation, especially when the enemy pressing in on the flanks pushed our men back at times. Not twenty yards off were several newspaper correspondents. One, Mr. Winwood Reid, a very cool and daring man, had gone forward with the fighting line. Of the others one soon attracted my attention by his remarkable coolness. It was Sir Henry Stanley, the famous traveller. A thoroughly good man, no noise, no danger ruffled his nerve, and he looked as cool and self-possessed as if he had been at "target practice." Time after time as I turned in his direction I saw him go down to a kneeling position to steady his rifle as he plied the most daring of the enemy with a never-failing aim. It is nearly thirty years ago, and I can still see before me the close-shut lips and determined expression of his manly face which—when he looked in my direction—told plainly I had near me an Englishman in plain clothes whom no danger could appal. Had I felt inclined to run away, the cool, firm, unflinching manliness of that face would have given me fresh courage. I had been previously somewhat prejudiced by others against him, but all such feelings were slain and buried at Amoaful. Ever since I have been proud to reckon him amongst the bravest of my comrades, and I hope he may not be offended if I add amongst my best friends also.

One of those near me, of whose nerves the other correspondents had no high opinion, gimleted me with his eyes as I walked backwards and forwards in a "quarter-deck" fashion. I smoked, tried to look "jolly," and even whistled

a tune at times to inspire confidence. But whatever I did, or wherever I turned, those unhappy-looking eyes followed me wistfully, and with a look that seemed to express, "I wonder when he is going to run away." This amused and soothed me, for I was somewhat over-wrought that day. The enemy's fire was very heavy at times, but fortunately for all of us, they did not use bullets, and their slugs, unless fired near you did not penetrate far. Some even failed to pierce the skin, but merely tore your clothing, and if the blow was not in a bad place it simply knocked you out of time for a few minutes. Indeed, many of us were hit hard several times by them during the course of the day without suffering serious harm.

For a long time little progress was made, although most of my reserves were already in action. But the awe of fighting in the darkness of a forest where the sun's rays never penetrated wore off by degrees, and we began to make progress slowly but surely in the direction of Amoaful village. It was only about two miles ahead, on the Koomassee road.

Rait's guns —constantly in action—were often not more than a hundred, and at times not more than fifty yards from crowds of the enemy who, however, clung closely to the bush.

The enemy fought well under the terrific fire we poured into them, and had they been armed with Snider rifles we must have been destroyed. As they fell back, bit by bit, the spirits of our men rose, and a British cheer at times told one things were looking brighter all round. The numerous messages which all through the morning kept coming in from every direction were no longer mere appeals for reinforcements: they were more confident in tone. As the booming of the enemy's heavily charged muskets grew fainter, our ranks pressed forward more eagerly.

More than once the enemy pressed in heavily upon the village clearance where I was. But I would not allow the houses to be loopholed lest such a defensive precaution might cause any weak-hearted men to doubt, even for a moment, that success, complete success was not a certainty. Such little points are often of consequence, and, as it were intuitively, I at once felt the importance of this matter. Once the enemy nearly broke through into the clearance, for some companies of the battalion that faced the enemy there fell back. They were badly led, badly commanded, and the affair looked ugly for a moment: but in the twinkling of an eye I saw Commodore Hewett, who was near the spot, rush to the front and sword in hand lead them back into the bush, driving the Ashantee assailants before him. He was indeed a man to be relied on in any emergency, whether by land or sea! I had met him often in the batteries before Sebastopol when we were both very young, and where he established a great reputation for that glorious daring which was part and parcel of the man. He was just the commander for such a momentary crisis, and all ranks seemed to recognize the fact, for in an instant they were inspired by his splendid example and followed him as if he had long been their appointed leader.

The front line was commanded by Brigadier-General Sir A. Alison, whose objective was the village of Amoaful. It was taken at noon by a well-directed charge of the Black Watch, and I was glad to learn at the same time that it was large enough to afford cover for my little army with all its wounded.

Desultory fighting continued at several points until about 2 p.m. At three o'clock I heard from Major Colley, whom I had sent back to bring up the regimental baggage from In-sarfu that the enemy had seriously attacked Quarman,

which was about half way to the former place. He drove them off, and proceeded on to Insarfu, where he picked up a large convoy of ammunition and provisions which covered about five miles of road. Upon his return journey, having this great convoy with him, upon again reaching Quarman he found the enemy making a fresh attack upon it, and it took some hard fighting to finally dispose of them. It was midnight before he rejoined me in the village of Amoaful. He had indeed had a hard day's work. But he was a man in a thousand, with an iron will and of inflexible determination, who would always work as long as there was still anything important to be done. And that day no man's work was more important. He had been about nineteen hours constantly employed before he lay down to have some sleep.

CHAPTER XLIX

The Enemy attack our Line of Communications

I DETERMINED to place Amoaful in a state of defence, and, leaving all my impedimenta there, to advance upon Koomassee, every man carrying two days' provisions on his person. Rations for two more days were to be carried by the spare hammock men of the regimental transport, and a fifth day's supply by the army transport. I calculated, that with these five days' rations, we should be able to fight once more and to take possession of King Koffee's capital, which was then only about fifteen miles off. It was fairly certain we should have this one more heavy stand-up fight before we obtained possession of Koomassee. As a matter of fact, we had to fight two serious engagements before it became ours. But whatever might be the nature or number of them, my hope was, they would lead to a peace. If, however, the King refused to yield, my intention was to raze his palace to the ground, to burn his city, and then fall back behind the Prah without delay. I expected this destruction of Koomassee would teach him that he could no longer reckon upon the protection afforded by his fever-stricken forests and by the courage of his soldiers, to keep us out of his dominions. This led me to hope that he would therefore be only too glad to make peace upon my terms. It is not, however, safe to reckon from European analogy what will

be the conduct of any African despot. The influences which act upon the educated man have little or no effect upon the savage of Equatorial Africa. And fortunate for England that it was so in this instance, for his refusal to accept my terms led to the destruction of the only dangerously strong native power in Western Africa, and consequently to the maintenance of peace in that deadly portion of our Empire.

My little army started from Amoaful at daybreak on February 2. We had no serious fighting throughout this day's march, though the advanced guard had much skirmishing at many points along the road. Our casualties were only three officers wounded and a few of other ranks killed and wounded. The village of Adwabin, where the advanced party of the advanced guard halted for the night, was not more than about three miles from the Ordah River, and perhaps a little under twelve miles from Koomassee. The advanced guard itself halted at Aggemmamu, where it was joined by the main body.

There had been some hard fighting this day along our line of communications. The enemy had made a determined attack upon Fommanah, at which place Colonel Colley arrived in the nick of time and assumed command. He had some difficulty in saving the hospital and storehouses, and the carriers were so panic-stricken by the heavy firing and the numbers wounded, that they could not be induced to leave with provisions for the front.

This was serious, for I now had only four days' supplies with the fighting force at Aggemmamu, but having appealed to the men to make those rations last for five days they responded most cheerfully to my request. Colonel Colley also undertook that I should have a fresh convoy of pro-

visions at that village in five days, and I knew that I could rely upon his promises.

This arrangement greatly freed my fighting force, when in action, from having to make detachments for the protection of provision columns. In several ways it helped me for this final dash upon Koomassee, where I had never contemplated staying more than two, or, at the outside, more than three or four days.

Aggemmamu, where the main body halted for the night of February 2, was an important post, as two roads led thence to Koomassee. I selected the western and longer road because I understood it was the better and more important of the two. I had the village strongly entrenched for the small garrison I intended to leave in it. I could not afford more, but as the enemy had no artillery, I was able to take liberties in this respect which I could not otherwise have ventured upon.

On February 3 we moved off at daybreak, and when we reached Adwabin, where my advanced guard and Lord Gifford's scouts had spent the night, I pushed them forward under Colonel McLeod for the River Dah, or Ordah. The enemy surrounded them on their march, and whilst stoutly opposing their advance persistently attacked us in flank; but they no longer showed any desire to close with us: the lesson they had been taught at Amoaful had made them more careful. Upon reaching the Ordah, the enemy were found holding the high ground on the northern bank, where the well built village of Ordahsu, about 2,000 yards beyond the river, seemed to be the centre of their position.

Our advanced guard was soon heavily engaged, the enemy being in force. All the prisoners taken during the day asserted that we had in front of us an Ashantee army of

10,000 warriors, besides considerable bodies operating on our flanks and rear. A little before noon, when the main body had covered about three-quarters of the distance to the river, a flag of truce, with a letter from the King, reached me. In it he again begged me to halt, and promised he would consent to all my terms, but could not, he said, send me his old mother and young brother as hostages, because both were "his counsellors and helpers in every way." The messengers also brought me a letter from Mr. Dawson, who evidently wrote in abject terror for his life, entreating me to halt, and if I did so everything I asked would be conceded.

I knew I could not cross the Ordah, fight a battle, and get into Koomassee that evening, so although it was quite evident to me that the King merely wanted to gain time in order to collect his army and to help it to recover from the effects of the severe defeat it had experienced at Amoaful, I felt it advisable to temporize. Making, therefore, a virtue of necessity I consented to halt for the night on the river. Doing so would enable me to construct a bridge over it during the night, by which, unless he had in the meantime complied with my terms, I meant to cross at daybreak next morning. A very few minutes only were required to write and deliver the following answer to the royal messengers—

"12.10 p.m. February 3, 1874.

"On the March.

"KING,—

"You have deceived me so often before that I cannot halt until the hostages are in my possession. If you send them to me this evening I will halt my army this side of the River Ordah.

"As time presses, I will consent to accept for to-day your

mother and Prince Mensah. Both shall be well treated by me. You can trust my word. Unless you send them at once, my army shall march upon Koomassee.

(Signed) "G. J. WOLSELEY,
"Major-General."

The royal messengers started at once with my answer, and we heard them, as they ran back, calling to their troops on both sides of the road not to fire. All skirmishing then ceased. I reached the Ordah about 3 p.m., and found it was a formidable stream of about twenty yards in width. Russell's Regiment was at once pushed across to construct a rough entrenchment and to cover the party who were to be employed during the night in making a bridge. The night was one of violent tornadoes and of rain in torrents; I never was out under heavier. It did not, however, prevent Captain Home and his Royal Engineers from working at the bridge throughout those long hours of pitchy darkness. No men ever worked harder or to better purpose, and it would be difficult to find a more remarkable officer than Captain Home, of whose character and abilities I have already said much.

It was an awful night, and the rain fell upon us like sheets of water. We had no tents or cover of any sort, and the blinding lightning added to our misery. I never spent a more wretched time in any bivouac. No fire would burn, and the ground was a soaking mass of mud, where few could find any sleep at all. Curiously enough, this was the first serious downpour of tropical rain we had experienced since we crossed the Prah. It was a source of great misery to every one, coming as it did so inopportunely the very night before we hoped to take Koomassee. Instead of being

thankful for the fine weather we had had throughout the campaign, misery made us ungratefully forget it, and we grumbled loudly because this one night of wretchedness had been dealt out to us from Dame Fortune's cheating pack of cards.

It seemed to be a very long night. But even the longest comes to an end, and daylight on February 4 found me at the bridge to see what progress had been made with it during that night of horrors. It was already passable, and nearly finished. The sappers—all round the handiest men we have by land or sea—had worked all through that dreadful night to good purpose. I congratulated Captain Home and his men in the most flattering terms I could use ; indeed, no praise could be too high for him and them.

My plan for the day was to pass the bridge at once with all the troops I had there, and to take the village of Ordahsu. Having taken it, to form a double line outwards from the road, and under its protection send on all the reserve ammunition, stores, food, wounded, etc., etc., into the village, which I would then make as strong as possible. Having thus collected all my impedimenta in Ordahsu under a sufficient guard, I meant to push boldly forward into Koomassie and seize it ; to make peace if I could, but should King Koffee prove recalcitrant, to blow up his palace, burn that great charnel house, the city itself, and forthwith quit the country. Heavy rains were to be expected at any early date, and I felt that to keep British troops in that fatal climate a day longer than was absolutely necessary would be criminal.

From the prisoners taken by our outposts during the night, I learnt that the whole Ashantee army was out to oppose me, most of it being then in my immediate front.

I gave the King two hours of morning daylight to enable him to comply with my terms if he meant to do it. I did not expect he would, and I did so chiefly because my whole force was drenched with rain and cold with hunger. This short halt enabled them to light fires, dry their clothes, and have some hot tea and breakfast.

When we advanced across the river, about 6.30 a.m., we soon found ourselves in front of a force which was certainly as large as we had been told to expect. Everything considered, the distance from all effective help, the small amount of supplies we had to depend upon, the extreme unhealthiness of the climate, the courage and ferocity of the enemy, all combined to make the position of the general officer responsible for the safety of this little army somewhat trying. But I was vain enough to believe in my own judgment, and my confidence in the carefully chosen officers about me and in the rank and file was unlimited.

After the miserable night we had passed, we were not so early in the field this day as usual. But the sun, with its genial warmth and brightness in the morning hours of even a tropical day soon gladdens the bivouac. The soldier's memory is short, and the enjoyment of to-day soon blurs out for us all the disagreeable recollections of yesterday.

At about 7 a.m. the serious work of that eventful day began. To my intense annoyance I soon found that the general position of affairs, the knowledge that the great and famous Ashantee army, under its King, was in front of, and indeed, all round us, seemed now for the first time to seriously affect my native troops. A company of Wood's Native Regiment was the advanced party of the advanced guard, and the heavy fire from the enemy soon became too much for them. They lay down, firing recklessly at nothing and became

entirely " out of hand." The Rifle Brigade took their place at the head of the column, and one of Rait's guns was brought effectively into action. Loud cheers and great beating of war drums on our right warned us of what was evidently a large force of the enemy in that direction. This noise was soon followed by a heavy fire, from which we suffered. It ended the days of a gallant spirit. Young Eyre, of the 90th Light Infantry, was the only son of General Sir William Eyre, who, famous for his daring courage, had distinguished himself before Sebastopol. I helped to bury the boy there and then, where he fell, whilst friends and foes together fired volleys at the moment, as if to honour the gallant spirit that had left us. As we scraped some rubbish over his grave to conceal the spot, I thought of his widowed mother waiting anxiously at home for the return of her only boy, whose still warm body we thus buried under fire, and whom she was never to see again in this world. Through death man wins eternal life, and it is by the deeds of men like gallant Eyre, who have given their lives in action for England all round the globe, that our great empire has arisen and been created.

At 9 a.m., after about two unpleasant hours of hard fighting and slow progress, the village of Ordahsu was in our possession, though the enemy, defiant as ever, still surrounded it on three sides. All our reserve stores of every nature were now quickly and safely passed through the double line of troops I had formed between the river and the village. The enemy held in force some ravines which came down from the upper level to the river, and from them they made fierce onslaughts upon what I may call my " covered way " between the bridge and the village. Regarding this and subsequent events throughout the day, I find it noted in

my private journal that although the enemy were more numerous than at Amoaful, and stoutly strove to bar our road, they did not seem to fight with the spirit or assurance they had displayed on the previous occasion.

About 11 a.m. a most determined effort to retake Ordahsu was made by the enemy from the north, east, and west, whilst they strove to break into my covered way to the south, along which the reserve stores were still then being sent into the village with all haste. The brigadier reported that he wanted help in Ordahsu, but there was no use in sending him native troops, as he said he could do nothing with them under such a fire. A little after 11 a.m. I transferred my headquarters from the neighbourhood of the bridge to the village. For an hour after I had entered it the place was a regular "inferno." Rait's guns in action, a deafening roar of musketry on all sides, and the loud banging of many thousands of the enemy's muskets, fired as fast as they could load them, all round the outside of the place.

The enemy now and then pressed in close to us with loud shouts and war cries, but steady volleys from our deadly Sniders stopped and silenced them. So near did they come at one moment that Colonel Greaves, my chief of the staff, emptied his revolver amongst them.

For some time it may be said to have rained slugs upon us, and few escaped being hurt by them. By noon, however, I had all my stores well stacked in the village, which by this time had been placed in a state of defence. We were still over six miles from Koomassee, so I felt the time had come for my final advance upon it.

For the honour of breaking through the masses of the enemy that crowded the road leading to King Koffee's capital, I selected my best battalion, the Black Watch. No

finer body of men, with more gallant officers, or under a better or more determined leader than Colonel McLeod, were ever sent upon such a mission. Rait's guns raked the road with a heavy shell fire, whilst volley after volley of musketry must have slain hundreds, and thus helped to open a path for these splendid Highlanders. The orders I gave Colonel McLeod were to disregard all flank attacks as much as possible, and to push forward straight for Koomassee. I would support him by every man I had who was not absolutely required for the defence of Ordahsu and of the stores collected there, upon which indeed our lives depended.

It was inspiring to see this distinguished Scottish gentleman sally suddenly forth from the village at the head of his historic Highlanders, their pipes playing the old warlike music of Scotland, all ranks knowing full well that come what might they must sleep that night at Koomassee or die on the road to it. Of ambuscades many were encountered and each taken with a rush; for what were such obstacles to men like those of the Black Watch! They were for the first moment as they pushed forward from Ordahsu, met with a terrific fire: many fell wounded, but nothing could stop them. The Ashantees seemed at last to realize this, for the shouting in front ceased for a moment as they fled in all directions in wild confusion. A short halt was made when half way to the city, for the men were blown, hungry, and tired.

Brigadier-General Sir Archibald Alison and his staff accompanied this advance, and were with the first that entered Koomassee, that terrible city whose streets had at all times reeked with the blood of human sacrifices.

Whilst this advance was proceeding I withdrew all the troops between our bridge and Ordahsu into that village.

The enemy at once in a howl of delight swarmed along our rear, and feeling we were thus cut off from everybody and every post in rear of us, set up a shout of triumph. They swarmed over the ground where we had bivouacked the previous night, expecting, I suppose, to find loot and stores there.

A little before 2 p.m., whilst the enemy were engaged in a renewed attack upon Ordahsu, I received a message from Sir A. Alison, written at 1.10 p.m., to say that the village of Karsi then alone remained untaken between Ordahsu and Koomassee. I had the message communicated to our soldiers and translated to the natives, all of whom, as it were with one accord, cheered vociferously. The enemy seemed at once to interpret this cheering as meaning that we had won a victory. It had the most astonishing effect upon them, for their fire ceased at once. The natives with us who spoke Ashantee shouted out defiance to our enemies, who thereupon ceased to trouble us further.

The moment had now come, I felt, for a rapid advance upon Koomassee, and with all available fighting men. Leaving a sufficient garrison in Ordahsu to hold it, and taking the Rifle Brigade with me, I pushed on with all speed for the capital. A rear guard, under Lieut.-Colonel Wood, V.C., consisting of Russell's and Wood's Regiment and the Naval Brigade, was to follow with the wounded, the hospital, and other impedimenta.

I despatched orders to Sir Archibald Alison directing him to push on to Koomassee with all speed. I arrived there myself at 6.15 p.m., nearly as soon as he did. The whole road from Ordahsu was strewn with abandoned war-trappings. The numbers of state umbrellas, of royal litters, drums of various shapes and sizes, were evidences of the

hurry and confusion of bewildered flight. Just before I entered the city Sir A. Alison had drawn up the troops on a wide open place in the city where he received me with a general salute. We gave three ringing cheers for the Queen, which made the hearts of all still lighter, full as we already were of joy at our success. All ranks felt they had done a brilliant day's work, and for our victory I am sure many fervent thanks went up to God that night.

We found the half-caste Mr. Dawson at liberty. He had sent me several written but cringing and un-English messages during the day entreating me to stop. One of them, more serious than the others, I received as late as 4.30 p.m. I sent my answer to his supplication to the Brigadier commanding the advanced guard: it was, "Push on."

From Mr. Dawson I learnt that the King, carried in a litter, had been present on the main road somewhere near the front during the opening events of the engagement. But as soon as our bullets began to "hiss" close to him he bolted, and all his immediate followers imitated his example. He did not return to Koomassee, and no one could or would tell where he had gone. His mother only left the palace just as the British troops were about to enter the city.

It had been indeed a marvellous, a curious day's work, for our loss was trifling. Although the numbers surrounding us were greater than they had been at Amoaful, the enemy had not fought with the same determined spirit as upon that occasion. They had this day expended their daring in attacks upon our flanks and rear, where our men, acting upon the defensive and under partial cover, were able to mow down their hordes with breechloaders at little risk to themselves. Strange to say, as soon as we burst out of Ordahsu and had taken the road to Koomassee, the Ashantee

army collapsed and made no further effort to oppose us.

The streets of Koomassee presented an odd appearance for some time after we entered, for they swarmed with armed Ashantees, who greeted every Englishman they met with "Thank you," the only English words they knew. I gave orders they should be treated kindly but not allowed to enter the buildings told off for the troops. It was getting late, so we had not much time to settle down well that night in our new quarters, but all of us were in houses. Big fires blazed in front of these temporary barracks, at which sat our soldiers and sailors discussing the day's events as they satisfied their hunger and quaffed hot tea.

Strict orders were issued against looting, but they were not very strictly obeyed by the Fantee carriers or by those Fantees whom we had found fastened to logs when we arrived.

We had some extensive fires in the city that night, which I attribute to the carelessness of those Fantee pillagers. This annoyed me much, but having no plans of the place, and as it was a very dark night, I could do nothing to prevent them until daybreak. I managed, however, to send a message to the King, offering to make peace and warning him of the consequences unless he did so. The house I occupied as my headquarters was not very uncomfortable, and was fairly clean inside; it had a very high-pitched roof of thatch, which, however, was not in the best repair.

I had issued a proclamation that men caught robbing would be hanged, and the police patrolled the city all through the night. One of our own Fantee police caught in the act of pillaging was hanged, and several camp-followers were flogged. On the chance of being able to treat with the King,

I did not wish him to think that I had wantonly burnt his capital.

The following morning, February 5, 1874, I issued a general order thanking the soldiers and sailors of all ranks in the Queen's name for their gallant services and their good conduct.

I sent off all my sick and wounded under a strong escort bound for Cape Coast Castle and thence for home. The sooner I could get the poor fellows into comfortable quarters on board ship the better, as the best restorative for the sick and wounded is the consciousness that each succeeding day finds them nearer home.

I again wrote to the King to warn him that I would destroy Koomassee unless he at once made a treaty upon the terms I had offered him.

During the day we had another downpour of very heavy rain. I felt the King would make no satisfactory peace and that to stay longer on the chance of his doing so would be to entail fevers and death upon many of the gallant men round me. In my heart I believed that the absolute destruction of Koomassee with its great palace, the wonder of Western Africa, would be a much more striking and effective end to the war than any paper treaty—no matter what might be its provisions—that I might possibly obtain from this brutal and deceitful monarch. But public opinion at home would have loudly condemned me had I had recourse to that extreme measure until, having done my best to make terms with King Koffee, I had absolutely failed to induce him to agree to a treaty of a nature that would be generally approved of. As a concession to what I believed to be the drift of English feeling, I had done my best to induce this Ashantee savage to make peace on reasonable terms,

and in doing so I had treated him as if he were a rational being. But with this rainy season already upon us, I felt it would be to tempt Providence were I to keep my soldiers any longer in such a charnel house as Koomassee.

I visited the royal palace and was surprised to find it though not imposing in character yet well laid out, clean and fairly well kept. Some of its buildings were of substantial masonry, and most of it was solidly constructed and admirably roofed in. Its ornamentation, without and within, was decidedly Moorish in style. The Ashantees have long had much intercourse with the Mahometan tribes further north, who draw their prescribed notions of civilization, of learning, and of art from Morocco. Many of the amulets worn by the Ashantees round the arm, or fastened to a necklace, contain verses from the Koran in Persian characters. At our prize sale in Cape Coast Castle I had had bought for me a curious black leather hat that had been worn by King Koffee. It was one of the many valuable hats brought away by the prize agents from the royal wardrobe. Around it are many talismans, in gold and silver casing, each of which contains a Mohammedan precept.

The palace abounded with curious and most beautiful gold ornaments which in pattern and design were peculiar to the country. All were made from very pure gold of a deep rich and reddish yellow that I have never seen elsewhere. But if the native goldsmith's skill surprised and interested me from an artistic point of view how can I describe the horrors which sickened mind and body in the palace. The whole locality stank from the human blood with which it may be said the ground is saturated. I have been in many barbarous lands where man's life is held cheap, but here alone was the spot where men made in the

image of their Maker were butchered daily in cold blood in hundreds to appease the manes of some cruel ancestor or in obedience to the mandate of some bloodthirsty fetish priest. There was a grove of trees hard by into which the murdered bodies were always thrown, the stench from which poisoned the surrounding atmosphere. Hating all horrors I did not venture into it, but others with stronger stomachs did so, and their descriptions of it made one sick.

Without doubt the most loathsome object my eyes have ever rested on was a sacred stool saturated with human blood, which stood near the place of execution, and which was always kept wet with the blood of victims. Great fresh clots upon it showed how recently some poor creature had been sacrificed there. Near it stood the huge "Death Drum," some four or five feet in diameter, and decorated round its outer rim with human skulls and thigh bones.

'Koomassee was well situated on rather high ground rising from the deep and wide swamps that encircle it. Its streets were wide and straight and it contained a large number of fine, well built, well kept houses. All were of but one story, with floors of red brick raised some two or three feet above the surrounding level. The lower part of the outside walls was painted in yellow ochre and decorated with an arabesque pattern of a reddish brown colour.

For Captains Glover, Butler and Dalrymple I felt the deepest sympathy. All three had done everything possible to get near Koomassee about the date I occupied it.

The very heavy rain that fell during the day caused me to think seriously over our position, so far away from my base on the coast and in a country where provisions for the white man are unobtainable. The rainy season had set in earlier than usual, and I knew how flooded the river Ordah had

already become. Many of the swamps we had crossed with comparative ease in the fine weather during our advance would soon be converted by such equatorial tornadoes as that we had just had into impassable quagmires. I could clearly see that although King Koffee was thoroughly frightened for his own safety and for the maintenance of his kingdom, he was not to be easily hurried into signing any formal treaty of peace. He must naturally have felt the extreme danger of his position. He knew that besides my little army of white men in his front there were three other forces led by British officers in the field against him. That of Captain Glover—about 2,000 natives and Houssas—at Odumassee on the Anoom River and only about twenty-four miles east of Koomassee; that of Captain Butler, who had advanced from the Prah near Amantea by a road about half way between Captain Glover's line of march and that of the main army; and lastly, that under Captain Dalrymple which was advancing through the Wassah country by a route about twelve miles westward of that by which I had marched on Koomassee. This great array of nominally fighting forces must have impressed King Koffee and his counsellors, although, with the exception of the Houssas with Captain Glover, the whole lot added little to my effective strength. They served, however, to reduce the hordes of armed men that at first lay between me and Koomassee.

King Koffee was evidently at his wits' end, not knowing what to do, nor where to turn for useful advice. Had I felt there was the least likelihood of being able, by staying a week longer at Koomassee, to obtain a better treaty I would not have quitted it on February 6. But I felt that I should not be justified in condemning my soldiers

to the risk of any longer stay in such a pestiferous climate on the off chance that it might enable us to get better terms inserted in any paper treaty King Koffee might consent to. I consequently determined to quit that horrible city of blood the following morning. I named prize agents to collect all the gold and valuable articles they could during the night, and ordered the commanding Royal Engineer to mine the palace and make arrangements for setting fire to the city in several places to ensure its total destruction.

We had a succession of violent tornadoes during the night accompanied with sheets of rain which poured in freely through the roof under which I slept. I tried to keep myself dry under an umbrella, but failed and lost my rest in the effort.

We began our return march to the coast at 7 a.m. on February 6. The road was in a pitiable condition, but all ranks were too full of delight at having left Koomassee behind them, with all its foul smells and loathsome horrors, to think of so small a matter. It was a real joy to feel that every step took us nearer home. What were mud, marshes, heavy tropical rains and deep streams to men "going home"? And yet one of the swamps we crossed reached to the armpits! Upon leaving Koomassee I had hoped that the whole force might have reached Aggemmamu that day, but I was delayed in crossing the Ordah River where I found my bridge submerged and with two and a half feet of water running rapidly over it. Only tall men could ford the river, keeping their mouths above the water. I sent the Naval Brigade over the bridge, the superstructure of which became more ricketty every moment. It seemed to be touch-and-go whether it would last till night. More than half the Rifle Brigade and all the Black Watch had to ford, their

clothes being taken over on the heads of natives. Having seen all across I pushed on with a small escort and reached Aggemmamu just before nightfall.

We had a bad night of heavy rain. The Black Watch, the Rifle Brigade, and the Artillery marched in and halted there the following day, whilst the Welsh Fusiliers and the Naval Brigade went on to spend the night at Amoaful. Not a shot was fired during the day. I spent it writing home, and at 5 p.m. my A.D.C., Captain the Hon. Henry Wood, started for England with despatches for the Government.

One thought banished all other reflections as we saw him leave camp that evening for home: "Will the Queen be satisfied with what her soldiers and sailors have accomplished in the trying campaign just finished?"

As those at home discuss some military achievement described in the morning papers few realize how much the soldiers or sailors concerned hang upon the question, "What will they say in England?"

The despatch I then sent home ended thus:—"In the despatch which I addressed to you on October 13 last, asking for English troops to be sent out to enable me to accomplish my mission, I stated that that mission, to ensure a lasting peace with the Ashantee kingdom, could only be fulfilled in one way—by defeating the Ashantee army, by pursuing it if necessary to the capital of the Ashantee kingdom, and by thus showing to the King and all those chiefs who urged him on to war that the arm of Her Majesty is powerful to punish her enemies, even in the very heart of their own country. That mission I conceive I have now fulfilled by the aid of the troops which Her Majesty's Government confided to me for its accomplishment. Yet

I can truly state that no means were left untried by me to bring about a peaceable solution of the campaign. Up to the last hour I left the King's palace untouched in hopes that he would return to make peace. The troops refrained, with the most admirable self-control, from spoliation or plunder; they left the capital of the kingdom, famed for its gold, without carrying away as plunder one article of value."

I reached Fommanah on our return march on February 10, 1874, having burnt and destroyed every village I passed through. I had had messengers from the King the day before, whom I sent back at once to tell him that I meant to halt there two days and that if, before I resumed my march, accredited messengers from him arrived with £20,000 of gold I would make peace. I sent back all our sick and wounded to the coast and cleared out everything behind me.

I found that in our three days' fighting before we took Koomassee our loss in officers was three killed and a number wounded, and of all other ranks, 13 killed and 368 wounded. It was sad news to learn that some of the wounded Englishmen were dying.

Captain Sartorious, of the Indian Cavalry, joined me here on February 12, with an escort of only twenty men from Captain Glover's camp, which he had left about noon two days before. He had come through Koomassee, whose ruins were still smoking. Nothing could prove better than his march did how utterly Ashantee power and renown had been destroyed at Amoaful and Ordahsu, and by our capture and destruction of Koomassee.

Out of the six great feudatory princes who ruled Ashantee provinces, one had been killed in battle, one was a prisoner in my camp, a third wanted to join him there, and two others

begged of me to allow them to transfer their allegiance to our Queen.

In the evening of that same day a messenger came into Fommanah to announce that King Koffee's envoy was in a village close at hand with the gold I had demanded and ready to make peace. I desired the envoy to come into my camp at daybreak. That same evening I received a telegram from Cape Coast Castle informing me that Mr. Gladstone and his Government had resigned office. This startling news made a great impression upon most of us.

The Harmattan wind had now been blowing for some time, so that although the days were still hot the nights had become actually cold.

A few days later the King's envoys arrived with 1,040 ozs. of gold: they said the King could not collect the 5,000 ozs. I had demanded. Of course this was untrue, but we had so completely smashed up the Ashantee power that, as far as England was concerned it mattered very little whether we obtained all the gold I had demanded or only a fifth of it, as long as we secured peace on her West African frontiers, as we had done by the practical destruction of the only native power that could have seriously disturbed it in future.

Two days later we reached Prahsu, where I went round the hospitals,in which we still had 105 patients, most of them wounded men. Alas! the doctors told me that two of them must die. Such is war: but the soldier whose turn has not yet come consoles himself with the trite saw that "all must die some time or other." Most of us, however, have ambitions or some aims in life and do not wish to die before they have been won. In passing, may I ask when is it that any one in his heart believes he has fully achieved

those ends? Before reaching the sea I overtook another convoy of sick and wounded *en route* for England. The worst cases it had started with, had died already. Two of them were naval officers who had died the day before. One was a fine young fellow who had been so badly hit in the head at Amoaful that I did not then think he would have lived so long.

I reached Cape Coast Castle on February 19, and had an extraordinary reception by its curiously excitable Fantee inhabitants. The whole population were in the streets, and half wild with passionate delight, the women shouting themselves hoarse, and throwing themselves in heaps on the ground before me. It was a strange sight, full of colour in every sense, for all ranks were decked in the brightest and gaudiest of tints. But no hue is ever too brilliant for the shiny black face of the negro girl.

Amidst the excitement of this "triumphal" entry, the sad reflection recurred to me continually, that of all the staff I had landed with, or who had subsequently joined to fill vacancies, only one marched with me that day to Government House, my military secretary, Captain, now the able and distinguished General, Sir Henry Brackenbury.

The troops began to embark according as they reached Cape Coast Castle. Among our transports we had a very fine hospital ship, and I never saw the sick and wounded in any war more comfortable or better looked after than those were on board of her. Lord Cardwell neglected nothing that forethought could provide for. He was indeed a great War Minister.

On March 4, 1874, I embarked with all my staff on board the *Manitoba*, bound for Portsmouth. My one regret in bidding good-bye for ever to the Gold Coast was, that it

meant leaving behind me the most helpful of colleagues, the best of comrades, I mean Commodore, afterwards Admiral, Sir William Hewett. He was truly a man in a million.

During the Ashantee campaign the Army and Navy had worked most cordially together in every way and upon all occasions. It can be truthfully asserted that the State, for which both Army and Navy exist, never suffered in the least through any jealousy whatever between these two services. Whatever I asked Captain Freemantle, and subsequently Commodore Hewett, to do for the troops, was done without a moment's hesitation and with an alacrity on the part of all ranks that nothing could exceed. I often said to the latter officer in fun that had I asked him to haul up his flag-ship by road to Koomassee, he would have tried to do so. No two men ever worked as loyal comrades together with greater cordiality and in more absolute harmony than did Sir William Hewett and I. He was the bravest of brave men, an officer of boundless resource and the staunchest of friends. Our soldiers delighted in him, and his cheery manner in action was to me worth an extra battalion. I shall never see his like again on sea or land. He has gone before me to that unknown land, the other world. But surely there must be a United Service Club there where old Army and Navy men may meet to talk over the wars by land and sea in which they fought their best, and often suffered much for Queen and country.

From the Ashantees I learnt one important lesson, namely, that any virile race can become paramount in its own region of the world if it possesses the courage, the constancy of purpose and the self-sacrifice to resolve that it will live under a stern system of Spartan military discipline, ruthlessly

enforced by one lord and master, the King. In other words, if it be clearly recognized by any people that the interests and comfort of the individual, whether he be king or subject, should not be the first object of national solicitude, but rather that it should be the greatness and power of the state as a whole, a greatness which brings with it national pride, individual security and also contentment, that nation will rule over its neighbours. Learn from the bees how the hive is governed: their system is based upon this principle, and with what regularity and success it is followed in those industrious yet brave and fighting communities.

The Ashantee and the Fantee were absolutely of the same race. The former were a proud nation of brave and daring soldiers, living happily and contentedly under the most absolute of kings. The latter, who lived and idled under the licence of our easy-going laws, were cowardly, lazy, good-for-nothing vagabonds, with all the vices of the Ashantee but with none of his manly courage.

I don't preach as an apostle of military despotism: I merely wish to point out that it has its good as well as its bad sides; and that in some cases it supplies the nation brave enough to adopt it with a renown that makes life worth living and worth fighting for.

Our voyage home was uneventful. Many old friends came to meet me at Portsmouth, where I was received with much flattering honour by the ships of war, etc., etc. When travelling to London, I asked my staunch friend, Colonel Sydney North, who was beside me, if there was any news in town. He said no, but correcting himself in a moment, he said, "Oh, we have had a big fire there." Not being much interested, I said in a very conventional tone, "Where?" to which he replied, "Oh! only the Pantechnicon." "The

devil," I said quickly, at once intensely interested in the matter. "All my goods and chattels were stored there, and they were not even insured." But no insurance money could replace them, for amongst other things that I regretted extremely were old family papers, reminiscences of my boyhood, and old letters, my Burmese, Crimean, Indian and Red River journals, and also all my books were gone. The last named I could replace, but my journals, the daily record of my campaigning and exciting life, I should see no more. I felt this loss at the time, and I still regret it deeply. What would I not now give even for the elaborate log I kept during my nearly four months' voyage from the Thames to the Hooghly when I was a boy ensign, even then a great reader of military history and of all books on the soldiers' arts and sciences.

The late Queen reviewed in Windsor Park the British troops who had taken part in the campaign, and on the ground presented me with my new orders of knighthood. The review was in a beautiful part of the park, the weather was fine, and it was very largely attended. So ended the most horrible war I ever took part in.

CHAPTER L

Our Habitual Unpreparedness for War

WHEN I look back upon all whom I have known in public life, I am constrained to admit that only a few possessed the combination of mental and physical qualities that are required by a great commander in the field. I have met scores of brave men who performed the ordinary routine of regimental and brigade work most creditably, but who were yet absolutely unfit for any high or even for any independent command. At the time I write of, few soldiers concentrated whatever may have been their thinking power upon the science of war. The British officer then was commonly accounted well read and instructed in his profession if he had mastered even the art of war, whilst most of us were content with a thorough knowledge of the evolutions described in the official drill books. The State held out no inducement to her officers to study anything not contained therein. Very few at that time had any ambition beyond regimental promotion, and fewer still were those who possessed imagination. And yet, without that great gift only a very inferior order of ambition in any walk of life can be satisfied, and certainly without it no one can ever become a renowned leader of armies. How largely it was possessed by Moses, Xenophon, Hannibal, Caesar, Turenne, Marlborough, Napoleon and Wellington! It is said to rule the world, and we are told that the chief

difference between the successful and the unsuccessful in most high positions is the possession of it by the former and the want of it in the latter. And yet, whilst imagination may convert into a poet the man of poor physique, it would not of itself make an able general of him. He who aspires to lead soldiers in war should be not only a thorough master of the soldier's science, but he must possess a healthy strength of body, an iron nerve, calm determination, and be instinct with that electric power which causes men to follow the leader who possesses it, as readily, as surely, as iron filings do the magnet. The great thinker may possibly be blind or halt or lame, and even wanting in personal courage, and yet leave behind him a far more lasting mark upon the history of the world than all the fighting men by land and sea who were his contemporaries. But a man with such physical defects could never have been converted into a great leader of men. All this means that whilst no one can be a great general who lacks the inestimable gift of imagination, yet not all the imagination of a Milton will of itself alone enable any one to be great in war.

It is the necessity for this rare, this exceptional combination of mental gifts with untiring physical power and stern resolution that accounts for the fact that the truly great commander is rare indeed amongst God's creations.

Some are inclined to scoff at the great national advantages said to follow upon inherited traditions of fighting prowess. But can any people inherit what is more inspiring as a sentiment, more advantageous as an actual possession? The strong man armed is always respected as an individual, and with a nation the reputation of her sons for manly strength and daring cannot fail to be a great national asset.

The unimaginative may profess to scoff at martial renown

because it does not necessarily bring with it either wealth or commercial prosperity. It may be, as it is with us at times, relied upon to a dangerous extent, for reflection warns us that even during profound peace it is nationally dangerous to habitually ignore the necessity of being strong in fact, as well as by repute. This is specially the case when your frontiers are not duly protected from the serious attacks of warlike neighbours. It matters little whether the rulers of such States be autocrats or democratic Cabinets, for whatever be their form of Government they may at any moment become the most dangerous of enemies, and to ignore this possibility is no mark of statesmanship nor of wisdom in any form. Besides our great and splendid fleet we require for national defence a highly trained standing army supported by great reserves of trained soldiers always ready to take the field with every necessary warlike appliance. And this we can never have without some form of compulsory military service. The nation in such a condition of military and naval strength can almost always count upon being able to avoid war, whilst the nation unprepared for war must always be at the mercy of any neighbouring bully. We are never ready for war, and yet we never have a Cabinet that would dare to tell the people this truth. Our absolute unreadiness for war is known to all our thoughtful soldiers, and without any doubt all the details which go to make up the fact are duly recorded and docketed in the War Office of every European nation. But these secrets (!) are studiously kept from our people by those whom we elect to govern us. When under the pressure of impending danger one Government purchases the munitions and stores that war would require, the next Administration, when the war clouds have cleared away, uses these stores to supply the

ordinary wants of peace, and are thus able to save a corresponding amount upon their Army votes for one or more years to come. The ignorant public, finding the War Office demands for money correspondingly reduced, rejoice because they have at last been blessed with an economical set of Ministers! Those who during peace contemplate the possibility of war are regarded in no favourable light by the professional politician in office. In the midst of peace, plenty, and prosperity, it is not pleasant to the easy-going to be reminded that it is only the actually strong nation that can always command peace.

Running through the character of all the best soldiers I have known in our Army, there is the love of national glory. The man who chases glory through the world solely from greed of personal renown, may be the bravest of the brave and the ablest of generals, but his is not the character the good man respects and the patriot reveres. As a national characteristic, pure love of glory has often been the spur that pushed forward some of God's greatest agents in our world. It has in all ages prompted men to noble and heroic actions. It is an invaluable asset of national greatness, and where it is not to be found, the State, be it large or small, resembles the lighthouse whose lamps, though possibly of the best pattern, are without any illuminating medium. Glory is no firework that, mounting high, is brilliant for a moment and then splutters and fizzles as it tumbles back to earth. True glory shines like a fixed star in the heavens of nations really great. It is begotten of honour and courage, and it cannot long exist when they have disappeared. So effective, so powerful for good is glory amongst all high-spirited peoples, that it seems to raise the moral character of those who can justly lay claim to it.

Those who in youth learn to value it as a holy possession are, as life goes on, inspired by its influence. It becomes eventually a sort of national religion and a veritable and powerful force in the character of a people. From this force springs the national ambition that makes all grades, the old and young, to wish their State to grow strong and powerful, and which instils an admiration for those doughty, virtuous and noble deeds which adorn history and give birth to patriotism.

A nation without glory is like a man without courage, a woman without virtue. It takes the first place in our human estimate of national fame. All States long for it, and certainly it is a big factor in that consciousness of national strength which commands the respect of both friends and enemies. It is a national heirloom of priceless value to the people to whom the world accord it and who are ready to fight rather than risk its loss. When the nation to whom it was once universally conceded begins to sneer at it as unimportant, and to ridicule its worth, the tide of that nation's greatness has surely turned: its manly vigour is on the wane, its moral fibre is deteriorating. If unchecked in this downward movement that nation will soon pass into the boneless, sinewless condition of the jellyfish, drifting with every tide and current, and will then cease to share in the direction of the world's great affairs.

Glory to a nation is what sunlight is to all human beings. Without it the State dwindles in size and grows weak in strength, as the man in a dark dungeon becomes daily whiter, until at last his whiteness passes into the colourlessness of death.

The noble courage that has its origin in love of country and sense of duty is not confined to the well-born; it is to be equally found in the uneducated private soldier. What

can be finer than his love of regiment, his devotion to its reputation, and his determination to protect its honour! To him "The Regiment" is mother, sister and mistress. That its fame may live and flourish he is prepared to risk all and to die without a murmur. What earthly cause calls forth greater enthusiasm? It is a high, an admirable phase of patriotism, for, to the soldier, his regiment is his country.

Keep your hands off the regiment, ye iconoclastic civilian officials who meddle and muddle in Army matters. Clever politicians you may be, but you are not soldiers and you do not understand them; they are not pawns on a chessboard. Leave the management of our fighting men to soldiers of experience in our British Army of old renown, and do not parody us by appearing in public decked for the nonce in a soldier's khaki coat. You might as well put your arm in a sling, or tie your head up in the bandage of some poor maimed soldier, to whom, when wounded and unable to earn a livelihood, your regulations allow a pension of sixpence a day!

I have now told the story of my early military career from Ensign to Major-General, and would here take leave of those who have read so far.

But should my narrative interest the general reader, it will be a pleasure to continue it to the date when I gladly bid good-bye to the War Office and ceased to be the nominal Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Land Forces.